

THE MEMOIRS OF HARRIETTE WILSON

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**THE MEMOIRS OF
HARRIETTE WILSON**



Sophie

THE MEMOIRS OF
HARRIETTE WILSON
WRITTEN BY HERSELF

VOLUME TWO

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VOLUME TWO

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N.B.—The illustrations marked with an asterisk (*) are reproduced,
facsimile, from the famous Deighton portraits

CHAPTER XIX

ON the morning of the day fixed on for our dining at the mess-room, Lord Worcester received a severe reprimand from Colonel Quintin for neglecting the drill.

We sat down at least thirty at table, and I was the only lady in company. However, as I had my station near Colonel Palmer, and was not presented to any strangers, I enjoyed the same sort of liberty as I might have done at any *table-d'hôte*.

I was already acquainted with the present Duc de Guiche and several other officers. A very fine young man who had joined only a month previous was present, and, I remember, that nobody said a single word to him; but I have entirely forgotten his name. I inquired his history, and was told that he was a man of good fortune but of no family, as they denominate those who cannot boast recorded ancient blood in their veins. However, instead of complaining to the Prince, or calling out the colonel, he put a good face on the thing, and always came into the mess-room whistling. He was a very fine young man and, while he carefully avoided any appearance of making up to his proud brother-officers, was ever ready to prove, by his politeness in handing them salt, bread, wine or whatever happened to be near him at table, that he was not sufficiently wounded by their cutting to be sulky with them, neither was his appetite at all impaired by it. Of this fact nobody in their senses could entertain the smallest doubt.

The Duke of Clarence's and poor Mrs. Jordan's

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eldest son, Captain FitzClarence, I remember had a forfeit or a fine to pay, for coming to dinner in dirty boots, or something of that kind. He was indeed voted by the whole mess a very dirty fellow in his person, and one who evidently conceived himself so much better than his brother officers, from being the bastard of the Duke of Clarence. Everybody acknowledges him to be brave; but I certainly should take him to be about as heartless as any man need be in order to make his way in the world. He had a trick or two which used to make the officers sick, and he ate so voraciously that he well nigh bred a famine in the mess-room. On one occasion poor Captain Roberts, who happened to come in later than Fitz-Clarence, got nothing but bubble-and-squeak in the dog-days.

Colonel Palmer scolded me very much indeed about Worcester's missing parade of a morning. I assured him that I had done and would do all I possibly could to make him more attentive. The colonel declared that, if he again missed the drill, he feared Colonel Quintin would act in a way to disgust Lord Worcester with the army altogether, and he should regret much his going out of the regiment.

As soon as we had left the mess-room, I told Worcester that he really must be at parade by eight o'clock to-morrow.

Worcester again promised, and again broke his word, for which he was immediately put under arrest, and desired not to wear his sword.

"By G—, if he vas de king's son, I vould put him honder arrest," exclaimed Quintin.

This was reported to Lord Worcester, who said it was the most vulgar and disgusting speech he had ever heard, adding: "What has a king's son or a duke's son to do with the usual discipline observed towards lieutenants in the army?"

When Colonel Palmer came to condole with Worcester, his lordship was a good deal agitated and confused, I passed my word to the colonel, that, if

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he would get Worcester's sword restored to him, I would accompany him to drill rather than he should miss it. The next morning I actually accomplished being up, dressed, and on my road to the barracks by half-past eight o'clock, accompanied by Worcester.

Will Haught, who was in a terrible bustle on this occasion, asked, "Where is Miss Wilson to wait during parade, my lord?"

"In my barrack-room," said the marquis.

"Why, my lord, there is nothing at all in it but a large trunk, and, you see, the room has never been put square like, and I should have wished to have got Miss Wilson a neat comfortable breakfast."

"Well, do your best," said Worcester, as we drove off.

I found Lord Worcester's barrack-room in a dismal state. However, though it was quite impossible for Mr. Will Haught to make all square, yet he procured absolute necessaries for my breakfasting every morning at the barracks. It was quite as much as we could possibly do to get dressed in time for parade; and breakfast at home was wholly out of the question.

Behold me now, regularly attending parade like a young recruit, dressed in a blue riding habit and an embroidered jacket or spencer worn over it, trimmed and finished after the fashion of our uniform, and a little grey fur stable-cap with a gold band.

From the window of Worcester's barrack-room I used to amuse myself reviewing our troops, but not after the fashion of Catharine of Russia. Sergeant Whitaker, teaching the sword exercise, used to amuse me the most. It began thus :

"Tik nuttiss! the wurd dror is oney a carshun. At t'wurd suards, ye drors um hout, tekin a farm un possitif grip o'th' hilt! sem time, throwing th' shith smartly backords thus! Dror!" Here the men, forgetful of the caution which had just been given them, began to draw. "Steady there! Never a finger or a high to move i' th' hed. Dror suards!"

This said Sergeant Whitaker was a highly respect-

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able man no doubt, only rather solemn-looking or so ; but that was all the better perhaps, as it inspired more respect among his motley pupils.

I fancy it was the sight of Worcester and me together, so Darby and Joan-like, that first put the good soldier in mind of matrimony. He certainly did cast many a longing glance after us, as we used to drive out of the barrack-yard. One morning in particular, he made a full stop when close to us, and his lips moved as though he had been about to address us, if Worcester's haughty glance had not frightened away his speech and made him, on second thoughts, honour us with no more favours than a mere military salute.

"There is something on Sergeant Whitaker's mind," said I, and Worcester laughed heartily at the idea.

We continued punctual at parade for more than a fortnight. Some of Worcester's friends generally joined us on our way from the barracks, to which place I frequently rode on horseback when the weather would permit.

Young Edward Fitzgerald, who is a cousin of the Duke of Leinster, on one occasion galloped after us, and addressed Worcester : "What do you think ? there is a d——d old gallipot-fellow has been gossiping about you, and tells everybody he meets the story of your being put under arrest, and having your sword taken away from you for making such a fool of yourself about Harriette."

Worcester, reddening with indignation, said, "I must take the liberty of acquainting you, Fitzgerald, that the lady you call Harriette I consider as my wife ; and, when I assure you that you will wound and offend me if ever you treat her with less respect than you would show to the Marchioness of Worcester, I am sure you will desist from the familiarity of calling her by her christian name."

Fitzgerald good-naturedly assured him he had spoken with his usual thoughtlessness.

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Worcester now inquired who had been making so free with us.

"Why that stupid old Doctor Tierney is the man," answered Fitzgerald.

Worcester said he should call on him to desire he would hold his tongue.

"And," interrupted Fitzgerald, "confine his attention to his draughts and pills."

Worcester asked what sort of a man Tierney was, and if at all like a gentleman.

Fitzgerald did not recollect to have seen him.

I assured them I had known him of old, and that he attended me when I lived on the Marine Parade. He was a pedantic, disagreeable, affected fool, who visited his patients in leather breeches and topped boots. He had formerly made sentimental love to my sister Amy when she came over from France. She passed herself off on the amorous doctor, *comme une grande vertu*, on purpose to laugh at him. As to his vulgar wife, she was ugly and unattractive enough to disgust a man with the whole fair sex, since such unfair things formed part of it.

Lord Worcester, on that very day I think, accompanied by the Duc de Guiche—but I am not certain whether it was His Grace or another officer of the Tenth—paid his visit of ceremony to Doctor Tierney. I cannot repeat the conversation which passed, but I know the substance of it was that Worcester requested that he would not make his actions the subject of conversation, but mind his own business, supposing he had any to mind; and, if not, he had better advertise for it, instead of publishing anecdotes of persons with whom he was not likely to have the slightest acquaintance.

The doctor, as Worcester and his friend both assured me, duly apologised for having indulged himself in using the name of a marquis, in common with thousands of low-minded people who always love to talk of the great, and promised to do so no more.

Some time after this I received a long letter from

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my sister Fanny, to acquaint me with the absence of Colonel Palmer from Portsmouth on particular business, and of her intention of passing a month with me at Brighton : it being nearly five weeks since she had become the mother of a lovely little girl, and her physician having recommended the bracing air of Brighton for the recovery of her strength.

This was delightful news to me, and put me in high spirits as well as Julia, who loved Fanny better than ever she had before imagined it possible to love one of her own sex. Worcester also looked forward to Fanny's proposed visit with much satisfaction, as he had always, he assured me, felt the affection of a brother towards her.

Fanny's arrival was a holiday for us all. Lord Berwick hoped much from her extreme good-nature and obliging disposition. Sophia, between Julia, Fanny and myself, was the more certain of not being left *tête-à-tête* with her night-mare, Lord Berwick, and Julia, whose very friendship partook of passion, shed tears of joy when she pressed her friend to her heart. My affection was calm, for it was fixed, and shall be eternal, if eternity is to be mine, with memory of the past.

Fanny declared we should all become good horse-women before she left Brighton. She was herself a most beautiful rider. Accordingly, the morning after her arrival beheld a cavalcade about to start from my door in Rock-gardens : it consisted of Lords Berwick and Worcester, Mr. Fitzgerald, two young dragoons, whose names I have forgotten, Julia, Fanny, Sophia and me. Lord Berwick was too nervous to trust himself on horseback, except on very great and particular occasions. I found much amusement in tickling up my mare a little, as I rode it close to his horse in order to put a little mettle into them both. It was rather wicked ; his lordship declar'd he was not frightened for himself, but only for Sophia.

Lord Worcester took the opportunity to give Sophia a few instructions about holding her whip and

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bridle. Suddenly, when we were at least five miles from Brighton Sophia quietly walked her horse towards home, leaving us to proceed without her.

"What can be the matter with Sophia?" we all inquired at once.

Fitzgerald feared he had said something to offend her.

Lord Worcester and Fanny galloped after her, to ascertain what was the matter, and how she expected to find her way home alone.

"Oh nothing is the matter," said Sophia, very innocently, "nothing whatever is the matter, only he will go this way," alluding to her horse.

Lord Worcester's natural politeness was not proof against this, and he laughed loudly, as he led Sophia's horse towards the rest.

The whole party dined at my house, and Lord Worcester did the honours of the table with infinite grace.

When the ladies withdrew from the room they had a thousand questions to ask each other. Fanny took upon her to say to Sophia, that she conceived she was treating Lord Berwick very ill in accepting so much from him, unless she meant to live with him.

Sophia began to cry and I to laugh. Julia showed us some very romantic love-letters from Napier, whom she shortly proposed joining in Leicestershire.

Sophia, at Fanny's persuasion, now began to waver.

"Come," said Fanny, "what does it signify to you, whether your lover is old or young, handsome or ugly, provided he gives you plenty of fine things; since you know you are the coldest girl in all England?"

The gentlemen soon after came upstairs, and before the evening was over his lordship was led to hope, from what Sophia said, that, if he were to furnish an elegant house, she might probably be induced to inhabit it with his lordship sooner or later.

Some few days after this important business was

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decided, and Lord Berwick had written to his agent in town to engage a comfortable residence in some airy situation, as Lord Worcester and I were returning home from our ride, we met the brave Sergeant Whitaker, who this time was not to be brow-beaten from his purpose by Worcester's proud salute.

"My lord," said he, coming up close to Lord Worcester's horse, and touching his cap, "my lord, if you please, I wants to be married."

"What the devil is that to me?" Worcester observed.

"Well, my lord," continued the sergeant, looking sheepish, "you see, if you would just mention it to Colonel Quintin?"

"Very well," said Worcester, "provided it is my business, which is what I confess I was not aware of."

"Yes, my lord, it is your business I assure you, or I should not have gone for to take this here liberty."

"That is enough," said Worcester, and we rode on.

The Duc de Guiche and Fitzgerald joined us, and, while we were conversing together, the young cornet galloped past us: I allude to the one who had been universally cut ever since he joined, merely, I believe, because no one knew him, and all were certain that his birth was rather mechanical. The young man rode a very fine horse and appeared to manage him with tact and spirit. I think his name was Eversfield, or something a good deal like it.

"What a beautiful horse that lad is riding!" said the Duc de Guiche; "I wish I knew whether he would like to sell it and what he would ask for it?"

"I have a great mind to gallop after him, and inquire," observed young Fitzgerald.

"Pray do not," said Lord Worcester, "as he will certainly be offended. It will indeed be much too cool a thing to do to a stranger to whom none of us have yet spoken."

"Oh, never mind," said young Fitzgerald, "he is a good-natured fellow I dare say. I spoke to him

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yesterday to inquire who made his tilbury : ” and off he galloped after Mr. Eversfield, who, in less than a fortnight from this time, became on excellent terms with them all : which proves that, with perfect evenness of temper and good-nature combined, a man of high independent spirit cannot fail to gain the good-will of everybody around him.

In about a month or six weeks Lord Berwick had fitted up a very nice, comfortable house for Sophia in Montagu Square, and Sophia, after obtaining his lordship’s promise that she should sleep alone, at least for the first week or two, accompanied his lordship to London.

A few days of their departure, Worcester was again addressed by the amorous sergeant : “ My lord, respecting my little private affair. I should be much obliged to your lordship if you would be so good as for to take it in hand.”

“ Certainly,” said Worcester, galloping off, to avoid laughing out loud in the man’s face.

Meeting Colonel Quintin on our way home Worcester, to get the sergeant’s little affair off his mind, rode up to him, and, after saluting him, he, in some confusion, mentioned that Sergeant Whitaker wanted to be married very bad, provided the colonel should not object to it.

“ You moste inquire de caracter of de yong woman,” said Quintin, shrugging up his shoulders.

“ I, sir ! ” exclaimed Lord Worcester, in evident surprise, which proved his ignorance of military duties.

“ Yes, my lord,” continued Quintin, “ I sall troble yow to make de moste strict inquiry about de yong woman ; and partiguler, vor her morals.”

Worcester bowed, and rode towards home.

It is impossible to do justice to all the delicate attentions I received from Lord Worcester during nearly three years. They never relaxed ; but continued to the hour of our parting exactly as they had begun. One day, when I was obliged to have a back

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double-tooth drawn, he turned as pale as death, being absolutely sick with fright : and long afterwards he always wore the tooth round his neck. If for only ten minutes he lost sight of me, by my walking or riding on a little faster than himself, he was in such agonies, that, as I returned, I was addressed continually by private soldiers of the Tenth, who assured me my lord was running after me all over the country in much alarm ; and, when at last he overtook me, his heart was beating in such evident alarm, as was, even to me who had been tolerably romantic in my time, almost incredible ! He flatly refused every invitation he received, either to dinner-parties, balls or routs, and for more than six months he had not once dined away from me. His uncle, Lord Charles Somerset, who, I believe then commanded the district, was growing very angry, and threatened to inform his brother the Duke of Beaufort, as he feared we were really married. It was, as Lord Charles said, ridiculous, in a man of Worcester's high rank, to seclude himself quite like a hermit. "At all events," continued the worthy uncle, "I hope you will not fail to be here on my birthday next week." Lord Worcester promised to make an effort for the birthday, while he frankly told Lord Charles that he should be always miserable in any society without me.

When Worcester returned home and related the conversation to me, I begged and entreated him to comply with his uncle's desires, as to his birthday at least.

"My dearest Harriette," said Worcester, "having bound myself to you for my life, for better or worse, and with my eyes open, I feel that we two make but one in our faults, and I hate to go to any place where you may not accompany me."

I assured him that I had no desire to be invited ; because I had no longer health to enjoy society ; and, in short, I would not rest till I had obtained his promise that he would attend his uncle's engagement.

When the day arrived, Worcester said he could not

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endure my dining alone with that stiff Will Haught, who would not know how to serve me with what I liked, standing behind my chair.

“ Well, then you shall give me my dinner first,” I replied.

For this purpose I dined earlier than usual. As soon as I had finished my dinner I gave him a gentle hint.

“ You have no time to lose. Your pretty new yellow boots, with the rest of your magnificent full-dress regimentals, Will Haught has spread out to great advantage in your dressing-room, *et vous serez tout rayonnant!*”

“ And why am I to be dressed up there, while the person for whom alone I exist, or wish to live an hour, is left in solitude? Why am I to be a slave to Charles Somerset? I will not go, let the consequence be what it may,” said Worcester.

Worcester’s carriage now drove up to the door.

“ My lord, you have not a minute to lose,” eagerly spoke Will Haught.

“ Put up the carriage, and bring me some cold beef,” answered his lordship.

“ What will you say to your uncle?” I asked.

“ He be hanged!” was the reply.

At past ten o’clock Lord Charles sent down a groom on horseback to inquire for Worcester, and state that the ladies waited for him to take his part in the quadrilles, which he had studied for that night.

Worcester ran up into his bedroom, and called out from the window, after putting on his night-cap, that he was ill, and in bed, and desired he might not again be disturbed at so late an hour.

It would be tedious to attempt relating all, or even one twentieth part, of the tender proofs of love and affection which Worcester was in the daily, I may say hourly, habit of evincing towards me. His lordship has often watched my sleep in the cold, for half, nay sometimes, during the whole of the night, sitting by my bedside. On an occasion when I was induced to consult a medical man about a trifling indisposition,

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which was not in the least alarming, Lord Worcester wrote the doctor a most romantic letter, enclosing a fifty-pound note, and declaring that his obligation to him would be eternal if he could contrive to be of the slightest use to me. He would send fur shoes and fur cloaks after me in hot dry weather ; because one could never be certain that it would not rain before my return. He took upon him all the care of the house, ordering dinner, &c., from having once happened to hear me say that I did not like to know beforehand what I was to eat.

When the Prince Regent, who then commanded the regiment, came down to the Pavilion Worcester was in despair ; for he saw no possible means to avoid visiting His Royal Highness. The dinner, which was given expressly for the officers of the Tenth Hussars, he was obliged to attend. On that occasion, which was the first of his passing an evening from home, after giving me my dinner he sighed over me when he took leave, as though it had been to go to the Antipodes.

Lord Worcester's rapture on his return knew no bounds. " My dear Harriette," said his lordship, " the Prince's band at the Pavilion was so very beautiful, that it would have been impossible for me, who love music to excess, not to have enjoyed it ; therefore, as I abhor the idea of enjoying anything on earth of which you cannot partake with me, I went into a corner, where I was not observed, to stop my ears and think only of you. I must now tell you that the Prince has given me a general invitation to go to him every evening, and I have settled my plan, to avoid it. I intend to sham lame, and practise it at home till I can limp very decently and naturally, and then I will wait upon His Royal Highness and tell him that I have a sprain which keeps me in constant pain, and confines me to the house."

Worcester began to practise on the spot, and being in all things a most excellent mimic, particularly when he took off Lord Charles Somerset, or his lordship's

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brother, whom he always called Cherry-ripe John ; why, I know not, for the man is as pale as a ghost.

On the following day, Worcester limped famously, although he had nearly betrayed himself by finding the proper use of his legs from very *ennui*, when he was, for the third time, addressed by Sergeant Whitaker on the Steyne “ respecting of his private consarn.”

“ How am I to inquire the character of your sweetheart, for God’s sake ? ” Worcester asked the sergeant, with much ill-humour.

“ Why, my lord,” answered the man, “ you will please to inquire of Dr. Tierney, as she has been living in his family, as cook, my lord.”

Lord Worcester immediately paid a visit to the doctor, from whom he learned that the young woman was clean, honest and trustworthy.

“ Sir,” said Lord Worcester, as soon as he could find Colonel Quintin, “ I have inquired the character of the young woman, and she is very good, sir.”

“ Good ! for what, pray ? ” asked the colonel, forgetting all about Sergeant Whitaker’s little private consarn.

“ Oh, sir,” continued Worcester, almost ready to laugh, yet, in some confusion, “ she is good, sir, I believe, for everything ; at least Doctor Tierney says she is a very steady, clean woman.”

“ And vat sal I do vid dis clean voman vat you talk to me about ? ” asked the colonel impatiently.

“ Oh, sir, you are not to do anything with her ; only you desired me to inquire the character of the young woman Sergeant Whitaker wishes to marry.”

“ Ah true—reight—vel—veri vel, I have no objec-shuns ; only tell him he is von grate fool to his pains.”

Away galloped Worcester quite delighted to git rid of the sergeant’s “ little private consarn.”

“ My lord, I wants very bad to be married,” said Sergeant Whitaker once more, a few days after Worcester had obtained the colonel’s permission.

“ Colonel Quintin has no objection,” answered

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Worcester, and the sergeant respectfully begged leave to return his lordship ten thousand thanks.

"But the colonel says you are a great fool, for your pains," added Worcester.

"That is no odds, my lord," replied Whitaker, as he saluted Lord Worcester, and then hastened back to his fair one, in order to acquaint her that his little private affair was arranged, and just as it should be.

On s'ennui de tout! In the course of time, I grew tired of this *tête-à-tête*, particularly as Worcester showed symptoms of sulky displeasure, whenever any of the officers wanted to join us in our rides. On two occasions he was furious! Once was when Colonel Palmer kindly assisted me off my horse; another, when he learned that I had sent a little note to that gentleman about borrowing a book, or some such trifle. Finding that this circumstance weighed on his mind, in spite of all I could say or do, I despatched a second note to this effect:

"DEAR COLONEL PALMER,—I believe you have a real friendship for Worcester, who has taken it into his wise head to make himself perfectly miserable about the forlorn note I wrote to you. Candour I conceive to be the best cure for jealousy; so do pray come to us this evening and show Worcester my two notes.

"Yours, dear sir, very truly,
"H. W."

Down came Colonel Palmer, trotting on a little ugly pony, his laced jacket covered with an old, short, brown great coat, and a shabby round hat, while the rain was dripping down his face.

"My dear fellow," said the colonel, "I would not for worlds spoil your comfort. I have loved myself, and know what jealousy is. I shall be wretched, if—"

And he hustled about to search for my notes, while his nose was so red, and the worthy man

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looked altogether so consolingly ugly, so like a disguised second-rate harlequin, with the silver lace occasionally glittering, as one caught a glimpse of it under his little, old brown coat, and then such a thing on his head doing duty for a hat!

Worcester burst out a-laughing, in the midst of the colonel's most energetic defence.

"I beg your pardon, Colonel Palmer, upon my honour, I do; but you really look so very eager, and so very odd and serious, in that little, tight, old coat and hat, that for the life of me I cannot help laughing."

Palmer, however, continued as energetic as ever, till he had received Worcester's assurance upon his honour and soul that he was quite satisfied.

"Then do come and ride with us, Colonel Palmer, to-morrow," said I, "since Worcester is satisfied that you have no designs against his happiness; for, really, we have had such a long *tête-à-tête* we have not a word more to say to each other."

Worcester still declared that his confidence in us both had never been shaken, only he was melancholy to think I grew tired of our *tête-à-têtes*, while, for his part, he never desired nor conceived any more perfect happiness than passing every hour in the day alone with me.

In spite of my gratitude, which he yet believed in, because I proved it not only in words but by all my actions, yet I did want a little varied society, that I might not fall into a lethargy; so when Fanny went to join Colonel Parker in town, I begged hard for, and at last obtained, a week's permission of absence, from one who could refuse me nothing.

"You shall go at all events, and I know I can confide in your honour," said Lord Worcester; "but I will not despair of obtaining leave from the colonel to accompany you."

The better to effect his purpose he went to Quintin with a box of cigars under his arm. Quintin accepted the cigars with perfect good-will; but, in answer to

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his lordship's next request, for leave to pass a week in town, the answer was,—

“No! no! my lord, you must drill.”

Worcester had a great mind to have asked him to return the cigars. Nevertheless, he kept his promise of permitting me to accompany my sister Fanny to London.

We found Sophia established in a nice house in Montagu Square, which Lord Berwick, or rather his upholsterer, had furnished with much taste.

Nous lui demandâmes si elle faisait, encore, lit à part?

Elle répondit que non.

“And what sort of a man is Lord Berwick?”

“Oh, he is a very violent man indeed.”

Sophia insisted on Fanny remaining her visitor for a week, which invitation, as Parker had no fixed residence in town, she gladly accepted. Sophia had at her command a very handsome equipage, in which we all three drove out on the day after my arrival.

We called on sister Paragon, whom we found greatly agitated.

“What is the matter?” we both asked at once.

“Oh,” said Paragon, “do you hear the screams of that infant?”

“Yes, how shocking! It is not one of yours, however,” said I, as I counted her pretty little family, who, as usual, were all seated close to her side.

“They proceed from my landlady’s child, whose mother insists I have half killed it, and that it never was in such pain before. In short, she declares she apprehends a convulsion fit.”

“Why, what can you have done to the poor child?” Fanny inquired.

“I merely administered one of Inglish’s excellent aperient Scott’s pills to the dear infant,” Paragon replied, calmly.

“This perfectly accounts for all these cries,” Fanny observed, and further declared that she had herself

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been put in perfect torture by the only one she had ever swallowed.

"Do you presume to judge of Inglish's Aperient, who have swallowed but one?" said Paragon, with dignified contempt; "why, it requires at least fifty boxes of it to pass downwards before you can properly decide on the merits of this invaluable medicine! In the meantime, the bowels must be severely pinched into obedience. Everything depends on the force of habit. Now there is my little Mary for instance; the dear little child has become so accustomed to a pain in her bowels that, if by any accident I put her to bed without a Scotchman, she always awakes in low spirits."

"Nevertheless, you must excuse my ever swallowing another to the end of my natural life," said Fanny.

Paragon advised her to make her will, assuring her that she would answer for the life of no person who had not learned by habit to digest a Scotchman. "Read what King Charles said of them," continued Paragon; but Fanny declared that not even King George himself, with the opinions of all the Spartans and philosophers to boot, should make her believe that pain was no evil, however people might be accustomed to it.

From Paragon's we drove to Julia's. She told us that she had made Lord Berwick pay her down several hundred pounds in ready money, for having interceded with Sophia and persuaded her to live with him.

"Well," said I, sighing, "you have a large family, and, I suppose, it is what we must all come to. However, I conceive myself, as yet, rather too young to take up this new profession of yours, Julia."

Julia defended her conduct, by assuring me she had not taken it up but for my sister's real interest: as a proof of which she declared that she had strong reason to believe it was Lord Berwick's intention to marry Sophia.

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Sophia said she would not have him.

"And why, pray?" we asked.

"Because," said Sophia, "because—I think it will be very shocking to swear never to love but one man."

We all dined in Montagu Square. Lord Berwick appeared to be perfectly happy, although he scarcely ever opened his lips; but the little he did say was chiefly on the subject of cuckolds and cuckolding. He wondered how many men had been cuckolded that season in London without knowing it?

I assured him I neither knew nor cared.

"What has become of Lord Deerhurst's valuable jewels?" said I to Sophia, by way of changing the conversation.

"Oh, dear me, I entirely forgot my jewels."

Lord Berwick earnestly entreated to have a sight of them, and was greatly amused at the charming proof of simplicity his beloved had evinced, in mistaking such leaden trumpery for valuable trinkets. Sophia begged to be allowed to return them to Lord Deerhurst with a polite note, and Lord Berwick having presented her with writing materials she wrote as follows :

"Sophia presents her compliments to Viscount Deerhurst. Has the honour of returning him his valuable jewels with due thanks, and all the gratitude that he has a right to expect from her.

"*Montagu Square.*"

The jewels and letter were sealed up, and despatched to the noble viscount on that very evening.

After dinner, his lordship's discourse turned on marriage: the pith, meaning, and spirit of which was to show cause why Sophia ought to become Lady Berwick. He could never rest till he had made the excellent, deserving Sophia his lawful wife.

Sophia again declared she would not have him:

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but before I left the house she was graciously pleased to say that she would give the subject due consideration.

“ This house is so beautifully fitted up, even to the very attics, that it would be quite a pity to leave it,” said Fanny.

“ It cannot be helped,” replied Lord Berwick, “ we must sell it; for, of course, Lady Berwick must inhabit my family-house in Grosvenor-square.

CHAPTER XX

THE next morning, I received a very long letter from Lord Worcester.

He abused his uncle, Lord Charles Somerset, for his malice in having written to His Grace of Beaufort on the subject of our connection, in a way to alarm him excessively. Worcester, in consequence, received very severe letters both from his father and mother, insisting on his immediately leaving me unprovided for and without the smallest ceremony. These harsh unfeeling letters excited in Worcester a spirit of defiance, such as mild remonstrance never could have produced. He repeated his solemn assurances to me that no power on earth, not even my inconstancy, could destroy his everlasting attachment, or induce him, however it must destroy his repose, to leave me. He deeply regretted his not being of age, that he might immediately make me his wife, and then naught could separate us save death. He reminded me that the period of his becoming of age was not very far distant, and in the meantime if they pressed him our marriage was not impossible. He begged his most affectionate regards to his sisters, Fanny and Sophia, and implored me, unless I would for ever destroy his happiness on earth to promise to become his wife, and remain with him for ever, &c.

I immediately answered Lord Worcester, begging him not to irritate his parents unnecessarily. I did not touch on the subject of our marriage; but desired him to rest satisfied with my faith, and that I would

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never willingly cause him a moment's pain, while I had reason to believe in his affection.

In conclusion, I informed him that he might expect me at Brighton without fail, in three days from the date of my letter.

Amelia was now living very near my house in town, and, as I really wanted to see the handsome young Campbell, I availed myself of her invitation to a small party before I left town. I ventured to return home from her house at about eleven o'clock at night, alone, because the distance was very trifling; but the moment I had left my sister's door I observed a tall, dark, and somewhat, as I thought, wild-looking young man following me. I felt unusually alarmed, and trusting to the lightness of my heels I began to run as fast as I possibly could. The man kept up to me, by running also. I had not felt so frightened for some years, and dared not look back till, absolutely breathless and ready to sink on the steps, I knocked loudly at my own door.

The man who was close behind me had never once opened his lips. His dress was respectable, and his features were rather handsome. He had an immense quantity of curly, wild, black hair, which fell remarkably low about his eyes and throat. His countenance was very dark and as pale as death. It was impossible to observe the expressive singularity of his eyes without terror: they seemed to look straight forwards at something beyond what others could see. It struck me that he possessed supernatural quickness of sight, while, at the same time, he appeared blind to the objects immediately surrounding him. When I first observed him he stood beneath a bright lamp, and I shall never forget the impression his countenance made on me. I had no man-servant in town: my *femme de chambre* was the only human being I had left in the house.

No sooner was the door opened, than I was closely followed by this horrible man, who closed it after

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him without having spoken a single word. I apprehended that he might be a robber, who proposed cutting my throat on my very first attempt to give alarm or call for assistance.

I am a notorious coward while looking forward to any danger; but I will do myself this justice, that, whenever it is, or appears, actually before me, and past all remedy except such as I have to hope from my own exertions or presence of mind, I then become armed with such a decided character of courage as would not disgrace my friend Wellington himself.

When my dumb tormentor had forced himself into my house and banged-to the street-door, my nerves became all braced by desperation, and my ideas were clear and collected. "If I am to die, God forgive all my faults," said I mentally; "but I will live on if I can:" and I fixed my eyes for an instant on the man of terror, to try to read his designs. The odd, quick, black eye, fixed on nothing but air, however, left me doubtful. One thing only I had decided upon from the very first moment, that to accomplish an intrigue was not his object in following me. He did not attempt to pass upstairs without me, but stood waiting my decision, with his back leaning against my street-door. "He is either a maniac escaped from confinement, or a robber," thought I, "and, in either character, I take it for granted he conceals a sharp knife or dagger about him. If a robber, he will stab me, if I make a noise, or desire my maid to call for help. Madmen, on the other hand, are generally cowards to those who act with firm courage."

"Now to decide," thought I, fixing my eyes on the man once more. "It must end in a guess after all." This glance took in the man's whole person as well as his face. The latter appeared to be of wonderful muscular strength; but his bones were well covered with fat, which methought did not look much as though he had been leading the vagabond life of a house-breaker. His clothes were good, and seemed

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to have been fairly worn. From his person I once more raised my eyes to his face. The cunning fearful expression of those wild black orbs decided me—he is a madman, and about to strangle me: and my only chance is in affecting to be one of his keepers.

“Follow me, Sir!” said I, fiercely.

The man followed slowly and meekly into the drawing-room, where he stationed himself near the fire-place with an air of indecision, nor once attempted to approach me.

“The gentlemen who are here to attend on you will be downstairs in half a second,” said I, seating myself quietly near him, and taking up a book, as if, God help me, I could distinguish a line of it.

Then I addressed him in a whisper, “They are coming; you have perhaps yet time if you wish to escape them; the street-door is unbarred; but you have not a second to lose; they are going to put on the chain.” The man, without having uttered a single word, darted furiously downstairs and, when I heard the street door slammed with violence after him, joy, or I know not what, overcame me, and I fainted.

This adventure hastened my departure for Brighton, where I arrived a day sooner than the one on which I had led Lord Worcester to expect me. Worlds could not have tempted either me, or my *femme de chambre*, to have passed another night alone in that house. Lord Worcester was overjoyed beyond description at my unexpected return. He would not enter into my idea as to the man who had frightened me away from London being mad.

“Why then, was he so awfully dumb? I asked, “and why did he not approach me?”

Worcester declared if he could once find him he would make him speak, and holloa too; but this, from the muscular strength of the stranger, I much doubted. However there was little probability of his lordship’s discovering who or what the man was; and in a few days the subject was not spoken of, though for years I remembered it with feelings of horror.

CHAPTER XXI

THE next day, as we were riding together over the Downs, I saw a deserter taken ; and was so affected with the poor wretch's look of distress as to have burst into tears ; at which Worcester and Fitzgerald laughed heartily.

This however did not prevent my writing a laboured letter, which had cost me three copies, to try to melt Colonel Quintin's heart in his favour. I could not help fancying, as the man was led past us handeuffed, that the expression of his countenance might be interpreted thus, when he fixed his eyes on my face :

"Lord Worcester will sit on the court-martial which will decide my fate. You can do much with him ; so have pity on me."

I saw a tear in the corner of the poor youth's eye. He could not brush it off with his hands poor fellow, they being pinioned. It was a fine clear day ; and the sun shone brightly on the sorrowful captive's face, as though in mockery of his distress : and I am to be pampered, and indulged in every wanton luxury of life, while my miserable fellow creature, merely for having sought that liberty so dear to all, is to be bound and lashed till he faints under the cruel torture ; and Worcester, the tender, soft, luxurious Worcester, shall have a voice against him !

Worcester appeared to indulge me, in what he evidently considered my excess of weakness, merely because he was passionately in love with me, though he did not in the least sympathise in my feelings : and yet he had seen no war to harden his heart against the

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sufferings of his fellow creatures ! I remembered to have heard told in the regiment, of the young cornet, whom everybody had cut, having nearly fainted the first time he saw a man flogged, yet nobody ever accused this youth of want of spirit or mettle. I had never liked Worcester so little as on that day. Not being personally acquainted with Colonel Quintin, and knowing that he was rather unfavourably disposed towards me from an idea that I prevented Worcester from attending to his military duties, the letters I addressed to him were anonymous. I of course entertained few hopes from an anonymous epistle ; but it was the best I could do for the deserter, I never acquainted Lord Worcester with the circumstance of my having addressed Colonel Quintin on this subject.

As soon as I had secretly despatched my letter, it was time to go to the barracks, where I had received a particular invitation from Colonel Roberts to dine, Palmer being absent. It was on a Sunday, and as we passed through the hall we saw Will Haught, dressed up in his usual sabbath-costume, with a yellow hand-kerchief bound tight round his head, *à l'ordinaire*, whenever he read the Bible.

“ Good heavens,” said I to Worcester, “ what a fright the man makes of himself ! Why I should think God would like him better in his pretty silver-laced hat.” This was very wicked perhaps ; but, as the sin of such a harmless little remark does not strike me, I am not ashamed of repeating it.

Cornet Eversfield looked exactly as usual : the only difference I observed in him was that he had left off whistling, and for a very simple reason I imagine, that of having discovered amusing companions in men who had previously thrown him entirely on his own resources, *pour passer le temps*.

The next morning, Monday, Worcester was obliged to attend the court-martial, which sat to try the poor deserter. I absolutely refused to leave my bed on that morning.

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Lord Worcester informed me that he, the Duc de Guiche, and—but, as I am not certain, I will not name the third, had sentenced the man to receive five hundred lashes!

"And what says Colonel Quintin?" I asked eagerly.

"I have just seen the colonel," answered Worcester, and acquainted him with the sentence.

"Well," I exclaimed in much anxiety.

"Why, Colonel Quintin has astonished us all, by declaring that he should not inflict one quarter of the sentence pronounced by the court-martial against the young soldier."

"What reason did he give?"

"Merely," answered Worcester, "that the man was young in the first place, and, in the second, that he hated the system of flogging altogether, believing it to be a punishment most of all calculated to harden the men."

"I will forgive Colonel Quintin his dislike of me for that one sentiment," said I.

In order to quiet the anxiety of the Duke of Beaufort, I absolutely insisted on Lord Worcester going occasionally into society; but, when he did comply with my earnest desire to this effect, he always left me with the reluctance of a school-boy, on setting off to his dull, dry, daily school.

One day, when Worcester dined with Lord Charles Somerset, he said that several carriages would be passing my door on their way from his uncle's, so that he should not require any equipage of his own to return in. It was a rainy, wretched night, and I was greatly surprised when Worcester, in his full dress regimentals, without a cloak or a great coat, came home on foot absolutely wet to the skin!

"Lady Aldborough offered me a seat in her barouche," said Worcester, "and we were altogether six, just about to drive from the door, when that widow, Lady Emily —, I forget her other name, who, everybody says, is dying for a husband, begged

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that we would make room for her too, and she got into the coach without waiting for an answer. ‘I must not crowd you all,’ said her ladyship; ‘indeed I prefer sitting on Lord Worcester’s knee, to putting the ladies to the least inconvenience.’”

Worcester’s virtue having taken the alarm, he insisted on its being quite impossible for him to intrude an instant longer, and rather than submit to such contamination as to consent that a fine woman should sit on his knee, he preferred submitting his best and gayest uniform to the pelting storm; for which want of gallantry he was rated by Lady Aldborough for the next fortnight.

We continued some time longer at Brighton. The duke appeared somewhat appeased at learning that Worcester went a little more into Society; perhaps, from an idea that he was growing tired of me, or, may be, he had discovered that mild measures had most effect on his son.

In spite of all I could say or do to prevent it Lord Worcester got horribly in debt. He was naturally extravagant, and everybody cheated him. As for myself, I might have been welcome to have brought away, in his lordship’s name at any time, as many diamonds as either Virgeman or any other jeweller would have given him credit for; and yet, I can say with truth, that I never accepted a single trinket from him in my life, except a small chain and a pair of pink topaz ear-rings, the price of which was altogether under thirty guineas. I even did my best to prevent his buying these, which were brought to me, as the man said, by the desire of Lord Worcester, merely to inquire if I liked them. His lordship being from home, the man said he would call for them when he returned.

When I saw Worcester, believing it was not too late to return the trinkets, and knowing him to be very poor, I told him that I never wore such things, and should esteem it a favour if he would not buy them. His lordship assured me that it was now too

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late to return these ; but I never suffered him to buy any more.

With regard to our house-expenses, I could have regulated them for, at least, half the cost ; but Worcester absolutely refused to allow me to trouble my head about them. Once I did venture to remark when he was about to borrow a thousand or two at enormous interest, that, since the pious Will Haught always carried out of our house daily provision, not only for himself, but his wife, and put down, in his pious accounts, more porter than any man could drink in his sober senses, I did not exactly perceive the fun or amusement of paying him very high weekly board-wages ; but Worcester having slightly hinted this circumstance to the holy man, he cried and blubbered till he was almost in hysterics, and I declared myself quite unable to contend with a footman of such fine nerves. Still it provoked me to see the man to whom I was bound by gratitude, for his apparent devotions to me, teased and dunned to death, when I knew everything might have been all square by proper economy, but it is really incredible how young, careless noblemen are used between their tradespeople and their servants.

When the Duke of Beaufort discovered at what interest Lord Worcester was borrowing money, he threatened the money-lender with prosecution for fraud on a minor, if he did not sign a receipt in full for the bare sum lent ; and these terms were accepted.

All this might be very pretty and very fair ; still my own opinion is that a bargain is a bargain. A man tells Worcester that he may have a thousand or two on certain terms, or he may apply elsewhere, or go without it, whichever he pleases. Lord Worcester, who was nearly of age, and of very mature manners, obtained the sum, to take up a bill, on which, as he declared to me, his father's credit depended. We cannot take upon ourselves to say that the lender did not put himself both to trouble and inconvenience, in

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order, at a very short notice, to put the desired amount into Lord Worcester's hands ; then, when His Grace of Beaufort's credit has been preserved by his son's punctuality, His most honourable Grace takes advantage of the mere accident of his son wanting a few months to be of age, to make him break his solemn word of honour, pledged to one who had relied on that honour. Yet the Duke of Beaufort passes for a very honourable man !

Now, as we are upon honour, I cannot avoid mentioning the very dead set which was made upon Lord Worcester about this time by the Honourable Martin Hawke, to induce him to play. As well might he have endeavoured to move rocks and mountains and make them dance quadrilles at Almack's ! Which proves to us that, where one passion is strong enough in the breast of a man or a woman to occupy his whole soul, he becomes dead of course to every other.

The opera-season had begun six weeks before, and I had engaged a very desirable opera-box ; but nobody cares for the opera the first six weeks of the season, and we, who are very fine, generally lend our boxes to our creditors, or our *femmes de chambre*, till about March or April. We were however tired to death of Brighton and old Quintin, and Worcester was waiting and watching for a good opportunity to address Quintin on the subject of leave of absence, having predetermined to cut the army altogether in case he was a second time refused.

" I never meant to make the army my profession," said Worcester to me one day, " neither did my father desire it ; but he conceives that every young man is the better for having seen a year or two of service. I had no decided objection to a little active service, as I hope, sooner or later, to prove, with your permission : for again and again I swear to be governed by that only, for ever and ever, so help me God ! &c. My object, in teasing and hurrying my father as I did, to purchase a commission, I frankly tell you was,

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because, since my figure is better than my face I hoped the becoming uniform of the Tenth would render me a little, though a very little, more to your taste!"

"There!" said Worcester, one morning to me, as we were riding past the barracks, "look at that young soldier: if you pleaded for him and shed tears at the idea of his being flogged, jealous and mad as I should have been, I must have applauded your taste."

I assured Lord Worcester that his sarcasms could not wound me on a subject where my heart so entirely and decidedly acquitted me: and I set about my examination of the man, whose beauty was to wash away all the sins any of our frail sex might be inclined to commit with him. He wore the dress of a private of the Tenth Hussars; his age might be three or four-and-twenty; his height full six feet; and he was just as slight as it was possible to be without injury to his strength, or the perfect manliness of his whole appearance. His person appeared to me, at the first glance, what Lord Worcester afterwards assured me it was generally allowed to be by the whole regiment—faultless, and moulded in the most exact symmetry. It reminded one of strength, activity, and lightness, all at once. His feet and hands were peculiarly small, taper, and beautiful. In short, persons, at first sight, were generally too much struck with this young man's person to pay any particular attention to the beauty of his countenance, taking it, I suppose, for granted, that nature had not been so peculiarly lavish of her kind favours as to have awarded such a head to such a body. The man was so much accustomed to see people stop and look at him, that he merely smiled, not affectedly, but with an appearance of good-nature, joined to some little degree of archness.

Worcester called the man to his side, that I might judge of this celebrated model who had even attracted the admiration of majesty. His Royal Highness the commander having taken much notice of him, and Colonel Quintin being really proud of having such a

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magnificent-looking being in his regiment, always made him come forward alone, before the troops, that he might be the more conspicuous. The soldier, by his deep blushes, I fancy, rather guessed Lord Worcester's motive in speaking to him.

Nature, determined, for once in her life, to show the world what a man ought to be, had given the soldier the finest, full rich, soft tone of voice which could well be imagined. He could neither read nor write, yet, either this man was naturally a gentleman, or his perfect beauty made one fancy so ; for it was impossible to think him vulgar. His hair, which absolutely grew in full ringlets, was of the very finest silken quality. It was not quite black, for there was a rich glow of dark reddish brown on it ; then for his eyes—it was almost impossible to ascertain their exact trait, they were so bright and staglike. I pronounced them decidedly purple, and was laughed at for my pains ; but there was nothing equivocal about the colour of his teeth—two even rows of pearls, not too small. His mouth, around which many a dimple played, was large enough to add to that manliness of expression, for which he was so celebrated. There was a peculiar character about the upper lip ; one might have imagined that it quivered with the ardour of some warlike command, just delivered ; but then the under lip was so brightly red and pouting, it ought to have been a woman's. His skin, of the very finest and most delicate texture, was pale, clear and olive coloured ; but he was always blushing. His moustachios, of which he was not a little proud, were like the hair of his head. There was much about the face of this young man, which reminded one of Lord Byron : and yet, beautiful as he was, like his lordship, supposing him to have been of the same rank in life, he would never have inspired me with passion. This however, was very far from being the case, generally speaking. Many stories of his prowess and of his conquests were in circulation.

The Duc de Guiche mentioned to us one day at

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dinner having met the handsome Hussar, unusually smart and much perfumed, just as he was stepping into a post-chaise. His dukeship insisted on knowing where he was going. The man hesitated, and appeared in much confusion; but the duke was peremptory.

“ My lord,—a lady—” said the soldier, at last, deeply blushing.

“ If that is the case,” said De Guiche, “ remember to bring back some positive proof of the lady’s approbation; the honour of the regiment is concerned, mind.”

The man on his return produced a twenty-pound note!

This Hussar spared no pains to set off his beauty. He had often been accused of curling his moustachios, but he steadily denied it, and referred his accusers to the persons most likely to have discovered the secrets of his toilette. Rouge he certainly did not wear, for he was always pale, save when he blushed. He was an idle fellow, and often neglected his business in the stable. Once, the officer of his troop threatened him with a court-martial; but, when Colonel Quintin heard of what was in agitation, he lifted up his hands and eyes, as he said,—“ Oh, mine Got! How voud it be in possibility to flock such fine fellow as dat? and such goot-tempert fellow too ! ”

One morning, about a week after our meeting with the handsome soldier, I was a good deal affected by witnessing from my window the simple procession which was passing.

The atmosphere was dense and heavy, while the rain fell in torrents on the heads of the mourners, and the wind whistled mournfully among the trees.

“ There goes a poor soldier to his last home,” said my maid, who happened to be sitting in the room with me.

“ He hears it not, poor fellow ! ” said I, “ nor wind nor weather can disturb him more ! ”

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As they passed on slowly by my window, I observed that the funeral was attended by one of the officers of the Tenth Hussars, to which regiment the dead soldier had been attached. I looked again. It was the Marquis of Worcester, and then I recollect his having mentioned something to me, in the morning, about having a soldier's funeral to attend. His lordship looked unusually melancholy, and for my part, though I always considered this a mournful sight, I had never been so affected by a soldier's funeral until now.

"It is the dull weather which disorders our nerves," said I, brushing away a tear. "What is all this to me? Men must die, and worms will eat them."

I was going from the window, when my attention was arrested by the sight of a wild, beautiful, young female, who rushed on towards the coffin. Her hair was dishevelled, and her eyes so swollen with tears, that one could but guess at what might, perhaps, be their natural lustre.

Will Haught at this moment brought in my breakfast.

"Do you know anything about this funeral, or that poor young female who has just followed it?" said I to him.

"It is the beautiful young soldier, who died two days ago of a brain fever, madam. That girl's name is Mary Keats. She was his sweetheart, and he loved her better than any of them great ladies as used to make so much fuss of him."

This man had stood before me, with all his god-like beauty but a few days past! Methought I yet saw that mantling blush, and the fine expressive curve of that quivering lip!

Feeling the tears again rushing to my eyes, I ran out of the room.

When I returned to the drawing-room, Lord Worcester was sitting in a very melancholy attitude, leaning on his hand.

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"What are you thinking about?" I asked.

"Why, I was considering, suppose it were my next turn to be cut off thus suddenly in the flower of my youth, that I should not like it!"

There was something so very comical and natural about what Worcester said that, melancholy as I was, and little as his speech seems of the risible kind, it certainly much amused me for an instant.

His lordship looked at me in surprise, and declared that he was astonished at my want of feeling.

I assured him, with truth, that I had been most particularly shocked by Will Haught's account of the young soldier's death.

The man, as I learned from Worcester, while in the stable two days after we had seen him, complained of a pain in his head, and applied for leave to go immediately to the hospital. From his unusual palleness he was admitted at once. Worcester visited him on the following evening, and found him raging under the influence of a brain fever. The muscles and veins of his finely turned throat were all swollen, every nerve was agitated, and his heart and pulse were beating so violently, that the former was visible at a distance. The man, one might have fancied, was endued with a double portion of life, energy, and animal strength. His late pale cheek was now flushed with a bright crimson glow, and the disorder of his fine, dark, auburn ringlets seemed but to increase that beauty which could not easily be disfigured. As the poor young maniac struggled and wrestled in the arms of the men, who vainly endeavoured to confine him by means of a strait waistcoat, he offered some of the finest models for the statuary's art which could well be conceived. His beauty, as I have been told by several who witnessed this poor youth in his last moments, acquired a character of more sublimity from the disorder of his brain; and all that supernatural, glowing ardour, that immense bodily strength,—the youthful fire of that sweet countenance—the eye which flashed such wild indignation on his tor-

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mentors—that frame, like quicksilver, sensitive in every nerve and fibre—the boiling blood rushing through those veins—all this was to become a mass of cold senseless clay before the next revolving sun!

CHAPTER XXII

IN a few days after this event we were on our road to London, where I soon learned all the most minute particulars of my sister Sophia's marriage with Lord Berwick from Fanny, who, with Colonel Parker, was still in town. Sophia, I am sure, never had it really in her contemplation to refuse so excellent a match; yet she had for several weeks delayed the ceremony, merely as I imagine for the honour and glory of having it said of her afterwards that Lord Berwick had obtained her fair hand not without difficulty. The thing had struck Fanny in the same light; and therefore, in view of hastening what certainly was a desirable event, she one day remarked to Sophia that she had observed a degree of coolness in his lordship's manner for several days past, and that she really fancied he was considering how he should get off the marriage honourably.

Sophia reddened in evident alarm.

Fanny affected not to have remarked her sister's anxiety. "It is lucky, my dear Sophia," she went on, "that you do not wish to be Lady Berwick, otherwise this change in my lord's sentiments might have caused you the greatest misery."

"Oh, no; not at all; not in the least, I assure you," hastily answered Sophia.

"My dear," continued Fanny, "why do you take such pains to convince me of what you know I have never had cause to doubt? On the contrary, since I have now such good reason to believe that the match has become equally disagreeable to both parties, I propose, in order to spare your pride the slightest wound, that you commission me to declare off for you in the

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most decidedly unequivocal terms, declaring in your name, that you will leave him for ever, on the very first moment that he renews the disagreeable subject."

"Why no,—I think—you had better—better say nothing about it," said Sophia, with ill-disguised anxiety and evident confusion.

"Why, pray?" inquired Fanny, affecting surprise.

"Why—why—the fact is, it would seem—"

"What would it seem?"

"Seem—seem—so very ungrateful."

"Ingratitude is to be sure a heinous sin," said Fanny shaking her head, and laughing incredulously.

The next day, Lord Berwick received Sophia's permission to write to her father, stating his wish to become his son-in-law, and further begging my father to be present at the ceremony which, with his permission, was to take place on the following day, for the purpose of giving his daughter away, that fair lady being under age.

My father was a proud Swiss, rather unpopular, and a deep mathematician. We were never in our youth either allowed to address him or speak in his presence, except in low whispers, for fear of driving a problem out of his head. He valued his sons according to the progress they made in that science. For the girls, he felt all the contempt due to those who voted plus x minus y a dead bore.

He was remarkably handsome, with white teeth, expressive eyes, and eyebrows which used to frighten us half out of our senses.

Lord Berwick, as well as many more, has often declared himself to have been much struck with that noble air for which my father was particularly distinguished.

The good gentleman was of course flattered on his own account, and probably thought, with the man in Bluebeard, that,—

"Tis a very fine thing to be father-in-law
To a rich, and magnificent, three-tailed Bashaw.

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But I do not mean to say he did not rejoice in his daughter's welfare for his daughter's sake too, as that would be to decide harshly of any father, much less of my own. We will therefore take it for granted, that, on this day at least *monsieur mon papa se trouvait d'une forte belle humeur*; nay, my little sisters have since informed me that, when one of them, having had the misfortune to upset a box full of playthings, which made a violent noise in the room where he was, as usual, puzzling over a problem, just as they expected little short of broken heads, and were all running into the most remote corners of the room, until of the opposite wall they seemed a part, he surprised them to the greatest possible degree, by saying, “*n'importe, petites imbéciles, viennes m'embrasser!*”

Sophia was to be married at St. George's Church.

My father had a neighbour, who once insulted him with remarks about the profligacy of his daughters, and, though the man had made very humble apologies, and my father had shaken hands with him, yet he never forgot it. This neighbour was a tradesman in a large way of business, who lived in a very respectable style of comfort. He had several daughters, the ugliest perhaps that could possibly come of one father. There was no such thing as getting these off, anyhow, by hook or by crook, by the straight paths of virtue, or the intricate road of vice. Not that I mean to say the latter had been attempted; but of this I am certain, if it had been, it must have been ineffectual.

On the eve of Sophia's marriage, as soon as my father had received Lord Berwick's polite invitation, he went to pay his good neighbour a visit.

“How do you find yourself this evening, my very excellent neighbour?”

“Purely, purely, thank you.”

“And your amiable daughters? Any of them married yet? Any of them thinking of it, hey?”

G—shook his head. “Husbands, as you well know, are not so easily procured for girls of no fortune.”

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“Indeed, sir, I am not aware of any particular difficulty. You know my daughter Paragon has long been respectably married to a gentleman of family; and, as for my daughter Sophia, I shall, please God I live, witness her wedding to-morrow morning before my dinner.”

“Who is she to marry, pray?” asked G—— with eager curiosity; and which, my father answered, by putting Lord Berwick’s letter into his hands, to his utmost astonishment; and, before he had at all recovered from his fit of envy and surprise, my father took his leave, saying that he had many preparations to make for the approaching marriage.

Next morning, as my father was stepping into the carriage which was to convey him to Lord Berwick’s house in Grosvenor Square, well-dressed and in high spirits, he was gratified by the sight of his neighbour, who happened to pass his door at that very moment.

This man, naturally envious, and having hitherto looked down with pity on my father’s misfortunes in having such handsome daughters, or, at least, he affected to do so, although, in his heart perhaps he had not despised his children the more, supposing it had been the will of heaven to have bestowed on them countenances less forbiddingly ugly, this man, I say, could not, under the pressure of existing circumstances, help giving some vent to his spleen, exclaimed, “Don’t hurry! don’t break your neck!” and then passed on, ashamed as well he might be at the littleness of his envy.

Just before Sophia’s marriage, Lord Berwick spoke to her, to this effect:

“My beloved Sophia, you are about to become an innocent, virtuous woman, and therefore you must pass your word to cut your sisters dead for ever and at once. I allude particularly to Fanny and Harriette.”

“Yes—certainly—very well;” was Sophia’s warm-hearted answer.

“And you will oblige me by neither writing to them nor receiving any letters from them.”

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"Very well; then I will give them up altogether," said Sophia, with much placidity; and yet we had never been, in the slightest degree, deficient in sisterly affection towards her; and Lord Berwick expected to inspire with affection this heartless thing, who, for a mere title, conferred on her by a stranger she disliked, could at once forget the ties of nature, and forsake for ever without an effort or a tear her earliest friends and nearest relations; and not because she was more virtuous than they were, since, on the contrary, she had begun her career before other girls even dream of such things. She had intruded herself on a cobbler at thirteen, thrown herself into the arms of the most disgusting profligate in England at fourteen, with her eyes open, knowing what he was; then offered herself for sale at a price to Colonel Berkeley, and, when her terms were refused with scorn and contempt by the handsome and young, she throws herself into the arms of age and ugliness for a yearly stipend, and at length, by good luck, without one atom of virtue, became a wife.

This from me may appear to strangers like personal pique, but all who know me will acquit me of having ever, in my life, coveted the society of fools. I certainly, being naturally affectionate, should never have been induced to forsake my own sisters while they were kindly disposed towards me: and in short, had a man to whom I was to be married requested anything so unnatural of me, I should have disliked him ever afterwards for the wish, so far from complying with it. Yet I do feel irritated against Lady Berwick I confess it: but it is for her slights, or what I fancy was her neglect of my dear departed mother. As for her having forgotten me, our indifference being mutual, I am no longer at all disposed to find fault with it. I should in like manner have ceased to love my mother, had she but felt it in her power, or had it for an instant been in her contemplation to forsake me for ever.

Nothing particular occurred on the day of Sophia's

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marriage, which passed off very quietly, and Sophia ate a hearty dinner after it, which was what usually happened to that interesting young lady every day of her life at about six o'clock.

Sophia, having the command of more guineas than ever she had expected to have had pence, did nothing from morning till night but throw them away. She would go into a shop and ask for two or three Brussels veils—send a beggar's family to an expensive tailor to be clothed—build a little island on a pond—buy a dressing-box of fifteen hundred pounds price, and all within a week. Lord Berwick was often reminded that this silly girl would ruin him without comfort or benefit to herself; but his answer was, that he could not endure to scold the innocent creature, but must trust to her common sense for shortly finding out that all this extravagance could not last, even if he possessed four times as large an estate.

Sophia, finding that money was poured into her lap just as fast as she could ask for it, and seeing no end to it, thought that nothing could be more easy to practise than generosity. She was however nearly four months in the habit of throwing away money by wholesale before she made an attempt to be of the least service to her mother, though she knew well how harassed that dear parent was with her very large family. At last she amused herself at her country-house by sending her mother cart-loads of dishes, plates and saucepans, proposing to furnish her a house.

Lord Berwick's agent having sold Sophia's house in Montagu Square for two thousand pounds, and presenting it to her when she really knew not well what to do with it, Sophia sent it to her mother. I mention this circumstance merely as a matter of justice to a little, uninteresting being, whom I rather dislike than otherwise, and will repeat it as often as I have an opportunity to do so.

Lord Berwick, in less than twelve months after his marriage, was so involved, as to be under the necessity

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of making over the whole of his property to his creditors, for I do not know how many years.

Our young sister Charlotte, then about seven years of age, was a sweet, lovely little creature, and promised to be one of the finest dancers of the age. She had been some time a pupil of Monsieur Boigera of the Opera House.

It was not the profession my mother would have preferred, but Charlotte promised to do wonders in it, and, with her striking beauty, there could have been little doubt of her marrying well from the stage; and a mother, who has fifteen children to provide for, cannot do as she pleases.

Charlotte had already made her *début* as Cupid, and delighted everybody who saw her, when Lord and Lady Berwick, seized with a fit of pride which they nicknamed virtue, begged leave to snatch the child from such a shocking profession, and they undertook to bring her up and provide for her under their own eyes. My poor mother joyfully closed with this apparently kind offer, and immediately made Charlotte forsake the profession, which, with her talents, must have made her fortune, with or without marriage, to go and live with Sophia.

The child, when at her country seat, became a great favourite with the wife of Lord Berwick's brother, Mrs. Hill, and all went on charmingly, till Charlotte began to look like a woman, and one of such uncommon loveliness, as to attract the attention of all the elegant young men in the neighbourhood. Sophia could not endure this. Even at the Opera, many a man has preferred offering his arm to Charlotte; nay, it was said, a country gentleman of very large property was expected to make Charlotte an honourable proposal. This was too much. Poor Charlotte, after having forsaken the profession in which she must have succeeded, to be bred up in luxury among nobility, who looked on her as half an angel, was bundled off to a country school, there to earn her daily bread by birching young, vulgar

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misses, and teaching them their French and English grammar, and there has poor Charlotte been forced to bloom unseen, wasting her sweetness on the desert air ever since.

Patronage is a fine thing!

I should like to know what Charlotte says about it as she sits darning her cotton stockings on a Saturday night.

My time in London passed on pleasantly enough at this period, as I went wherever I pleased. The only drawback to my comfort was that the Duke of Beaufort did nothing but write and torment Lord Worcester to leave me, while Worcester's love seemed to increase on the receipt of every scolding letter. He daily swore to make me his wife, and professed to be wretched, whenever I desired him not to think of marriage.

Her Grace of Beaufort's letters to her son, which I always had the honour of perusing, were extremely eloquent on my subject. The duchess, unlike Lord Frederick Bentinck, was fond of hard words. "This absurd attachment of yours for this vile profligate woman, does but prove," wrote this noble personage, "the total subjugation of your understanding."

In answer to this nervous paragraph, one of Her Grace's epistles, I beg leave to correct the word subjugation. Not that there is any harm in it, on the contrary it is a very learned kind of a full sounding expression and looks handsome in a letter, but then it is too learned to be so ignorantly misapplied. Her Grace, in her zeal to be fine, must have mistaken it for something else, since I can offer an unanswerable reason why her hopeful son, Worcester, could not have his understanding subjugated even by the wonderful charms of Harriette Wilson, and that in four simple words:—He never possessed any.

Her Grace, in her infinite condescension, then goes on to state that the said Harriette Wilson is the lowest

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and most profligate creature alive. In short, so very bad, that she once sent for her own immaculate brother!—alluding to my having ordered up that worthy man to Marylebone Fields, one morning before breakfast. After continuing this most lady-like style of abuse in detail, enlarging on my former little sins and peccadillos, she writes, in a postscript: “Of course, Worcester, your own sense”—she forgot that it was subjugated—“will teach you to conceal this letter from the person of whom I have spoken so freely.”

“It is very hard upon me!” said I one day to Lord Worcester, after reading one of Her Grace’s flattering letters, “I was well disposed towards you, and towards your family for your sake. I have constantly refused to accept expensive presents from you, and I have saved you from gambling, and various other vices and misfortunes to which you would otherwise have been, shall I say, in humble imitation of Her Grace, subjugated? I have refused to become Marchioness of Worcester over and over again, believing that such a marriage would distress your family, and, in return, your duchess-mother, with the usual charity of all ladies who either are or pass for being chaste, insists on my being at once turned adrift into the streets and entirely unprovided for.”

At last there came another very severe letter from the Duke of Beaufort, insisting on Lord Worcester immediately joining him at his seat near Oxford.

Worcester declared that he would not go, while I insisted that he should not disobey his father.

“Do not irritate His Grace,” said I; “but, on the contrary, strive to set his mind at rest, by assuring him that I wish you too well to marry you. True, the duchess is very abusive, rather vulgarly so perhaps, all things considered; but I have no wish to deserve harsh language from your mother, in order that I may think of it with calm indifference.”

Worcester spoke very handsomely on this subject.

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‘ I love my father and mother,’ said he, “and it would go to my heart to disobey them, if I saw them inclined to act with justice and humanity towards you. As it is, I could not resign them for ever without the deepest regret: at the same time, I solemnly declare to you, upon my honour and soul, if it were necessary to make a choice, and I must lose for ever either you, to whom I conceive myself bound quite as sacredly as though we were really married, or my whole family, I would not hesitate one instant, not even if they could cut me off with a shilling. I should prefer, ten thousand times over, driving a mail coach for our daily support, and living with you in a garret to any magnificence that could be offered me without you.”

His lordship was miserably agitated, when he found that I seriously insisted on his leaving me to join his father, and perhaps he had, for this once, ventured to disobey me, had not his uncle, Lord William Somerset, at the Duke of Beaufort’s request, called on us, and insisted on not leaving the house till he had seen Worcester safe off in the Oxford mail.

I forgot to mention a little circumstance which happened on the day previous to Lord Worcester’s departure for Badminton, which is the name of his father’s country-seat. We were sitting near one of the windows together, when a man on the opposite side of the way attracted my notice. Surely methought, I must have seen that man before. He was standing quite still, and for several minutes I could not for the life of me catch a second glimpse of his face, which had been turned towards us for an instant. At last he seemed as though he were making for my door.

“ That is the man ! ” I abruptly exclaimed ; “ that is the madman ! ”

I spoke from the sudden impulse of the moment, and regretted no less instantaneously ; but nothing I could say or do had power to detain Lord Worcester, who immediately darted across the street, and

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inquired of the man what his business had been with me, and why he had presumed to enter my house ?

The man answered, that he had no business with me, and had never dreamed of entering my house.

Worcester called him a d—d liar, and throwing his card at him, at the same time, asked him who he was, and where he came from ?

The man refused to satisfy this inquiry and fixed his eyes on Worcester with a vacant gaze.

“ You won’t tell me your name then ? ”

“ No,” said the man, at last, adding that he did not choose to have his name handed about in such company.

Worcester remarked that he rather fancied no one would ever hear his name as a fighter ; but, if he was ashamed of his name, and felt conscious that his rank was too low in life for him to meet in a duel, without disgracing himself as a gentleman, he was ready to turn into the next field with him, and set to work with their fists, in the way most suitable to a black-guard like him !

The man declared that he was not a bruiser, and refused to stir.

Worcester struck him with his stick, when the man put himself into an attitude of defence ; but not at all scientifically.

The fight lasted full twenty minutes. It took place in a public street in the broad face of day.

I did not see the end of the contest, but Worcester, on his return, informed me that he had been victorious, and then retired to wash the blood from his hands and nose.

The Honourable Berkeley Craven, who at all times can smell out a fight as often as such a thing occurs within ten miles of him, was present, I presume, at this mighty encounter, since he afterwards mentioned the circumstance to me, declaring that he knew Worcester’s antagonist to be a young man of good family, who had twice made his escape from a mad-house.

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Poor fellow ! however he appeared to be of such muscular strength, that I do not think Worcester could have done him any material injury ; notwithstanding his lordship was a pupil of Jackson.

Worcester shed tears in abundance at parting with me. His uncle, Lord William Somerset, placed himself in an easy chair, swearing he would not stir without his nephew.

Worcester declared to his uncle, that he was a d—m—n bore, and ought to be sensible how desirous he naturally must be to pass an hour or two alone with me, previous to his departure for Badminton.

Lord William Somerset remained firm as a rock, and took Worcester out of the house at half-past seven in the evening ; which happened to be just in time to secure his place in the Oxford mail.

CHAPTER XXIII

Now what am I next to amuse my readers with ? No, that's vanity. I meant to ask what I should try to amuse them with ? Worcester is gone to his papa's, at Badminton ; and I, being sworn to constancy, have no other *beaux* to write about.

Let us inquire what my sister Fanny is doing ? She looked very serious when I called upon her, as she sat nursing Parker's pretty little daughter and kissing it.

"Colonel Parker is going to Spain," said Fanny to me, the moment I entered her room, and I saw a tear trembling in her bright eye.

"So must half the fine young men in England," was my reply.

"Parker is the only man on earth who has ever treated me with true respect and kindness," continued Fanny, "and my attachment to him is very strong ; more so perhaps than you think for."

"I told her that I could not doubt her love for the father of her infant."

"I am not romantic," Fanny went on to say, while sitting in a musing sort of attitude and seeming quite inattentive to my last wise speech. "It is not in my nature to be in the least romantic or sentimental, yet when Parker forsakes me I shall die of it !"

"Fiddlestick," I answered, "you are always talking about dying, merely because your nerves are weak, and, in the meantime, I never saw you look better in my life. When does Colonel Parker set off ?"

"To-morrow night," she replied.

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"He will write, of course?"

"He has promised to do so by every post."

I had seldom seen Fanny so serious. I begged her to come to me as soon as Parker had left her, and promised to do everything in my power to enliven her.

She told me that Julia wished her of all things to board with her again as soon as Parker went to Spain, and, continued Fanny, "I feel so melancholy that I think I shall avail myself of her invitation, provided she will permit me to furnish a spare, empty room she has in her house, and keep it entirely to myself. Do you know," continued Fanny, "I, who used to abhor solitude even for a single morning, am now become very fond of it? I love to think and to read; and, the more serious the work the better it suits the present tone of my mind. I have lately been copying the passages which have most struck me, and, when you look them over, you will be astonished at my change of sentiments and taste."

I asked her if her late studies had been religious.

"No," said Fanny; "but the books I like now are such as I consider most calculated to teach us fortitude to endure the ills, miseries, and disappointments of this life. I shall yet, I know, suffer much in mind, as well as in body; and the end of it all will be death! Do not I require fortitude?"

"We shall all die," was my answer; "but the time and the manner of our deaths is unknown to us. No doubt, too, we all have our portion of sorrow and trouble to look forward to; but those sorrows are seldom without some alleviation, or mixture of happiness, neither are the comforts we are permitted to enjoy on earth by any means confined to those of youthful age alone. If, in a more advanced period we feel not wild rapture, yet are we infinitely more calm, and our pleasures are more real and certain, since they depend on the present. In advanced life we enjoy, while girls and boys pursue shadows and live on hope."

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"There is no doubt that every age has its portion of enjoyments as well as cares," rejoined Fanny, "but, for myself, I am not I confess sanguine. I feel a weight about the region of my heart."

I interrupted her, and insisted on taking her directly to Julia's, where I left her, promising to see her early on the following day.

Worcester sent me about six sheets of foolscap, scribbled all over in every corner, once a day, and on Sunday he rode nine miles to overtake the coach with a volume! He had, he said, been accused by the duke his father of wishing to make me his wife, and he had found it impossible to deny that such was, in fact, his first hope. His father used very harsh words, and Worcester's courage and firmness had consequently increased. Suddenly, the duke had changed this high tone, and taking his son by the hand addressed him with much apparent feeling. This, as I afterwards learned from His Grace's brother, was a mere cold-blooded plan, settled between these two hopeful gentlemen, who had agreed that their best chance was to touch up the young marquis with a little bit of sentiment. Nay, in their zeal, they agreed to carry the farce to such lengths as even to speak of me, their night-mare, the person on earth which they most abhorred, and whose influence they most dreaded, with an appearance of feeling and respect, praying inwardly that either an earthquake might swallow me up, or that I might be seized with sudden death.

"My dear, dear boy," said Beaufort, "you must forgive me if the extreme anxiety you have for such a long time occasioned myself and your poor mother, has, for a season, made me lose my temper. I see that your feeling for Harriette is real, and beyond your power to overcome at present. Indeed, if she is good to you, I desire that every care and attention should be paid her, and you should return to her, and be teased no more on the subject: only pass your word and honour to me, as a son, and as a gentleman,

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that you will never marry her, and you shall hear no more from either of us on the subject."

Worcester, in his letter to me, where he described this scene, professed to have been deeply affected by it, and to have passed the following night and day in tears, yet he firmly refused to comply with his father's request. *Et tout fut consternation dans le plus beau et le plus agréable château, qu'on puisse imaginer!*

All those letters from Lord Worcester having been since returned to the Duke of Beaufort, that honourable nobleman with his son may be pleased to deny that such letters were written. However, after referring my readers to the celebrated Henry Brougham, M.P., of Lincoln's Inn, and another highly respectable counsellor of the same place, named Treslove, who have both read the whole of Lord Worcester's correspondence (why they did so shall be told hereafter), I will leave them to form their own conclusion as to the truth or falsehood of what I have written, or shall write, on the subject of those worthy wiseacres, the Beauforts!

Worcester concluded this letter by declaring he could not and would not remain any longer absent from me, and that I was all the consolation which was left him on earth, since his father was about to turn his back on him for ever.

I answered this letter immediately, to this effect.

" If, my dear Worcester, you do not immediately write, to give me your honour that you have set your father's mind at rest by having complied with his late reasonable request, you lose me now at once and for ever. For I shall go where you will not find me. What happiness, think you, could we enjoy, at the expense of making your parents miserable ? They have good reason for what they request, and to save the time it would take you to contradict this last assertion of mine, I declare to you that I never will be your wife.

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“*Au reste*, my dear Worcester, what is there in a ceremony and what do I care for a title? I swear, so help me God, I have ever been faithful to you since the first hour in which I placed myself under your protection, and in all and everything that was in my power, I have acted, and ever will act in a way to deserve your esteem as well as that of your family, in order that the abuse of Her Grace of Beaufort may sit light on my heart and mind. What gratification think you, could I enjoy at the idea of having merely inspired you with a strong passion for me, while I felt that, by my selfish conduct and the advantage I was ready to take of such an accidental circumstance, I had forfeited all right and title to your respect or future friendship?

“I have said enough I am sure, to convince any man worthy the name, and therefore you will have made friends with your father, and be on your road to join me very shortly after the receipt of this letter. So till then God bless you; but remember I can be firm and keep my word.”

In three days after I had despatched the above letter, Worcester returned to me, having made the Duke of Beaufort the promise he had required. We now enjoyed something like quietness during the remainder of our stay in London.

Although Worcester appeared to have suffered much during his visit to his father's, for he was much paler and thinner, I really thought him consumptive. It was ever his lordship's pride and delight to drive me about the streets or the park, and to accompany me wherever I went. He but seldom went into society, and when he did, he always refused to dance much as he used to like it. In short, his passion for me, which from the very first seemed so ardent that I knew not it was in human nature that it could be susceptible of increase, became stronger with the difficulty of indulging it.

“My brother is a fool,” said Lord William Somerset

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one day to us. “ I would have cured you both in less than a month, and made Worcester hate you most cordially.”

“ How pray ? ” I inquired.

“ Why,” continued Lord William, “ merely by shutting you up in one of my country houses together, making it my request that you never left each other an instant, to the end of your lives.”

Worcester called God to witness that he was as sure as of his existence, that he could never love anything in the shape of a woman but myself : and, “ were Harriette ever to leave me,” he continued, “ I should become a mere, cold-blooded, unfeeling profligate ; for all the good about me is practised by her advice and example, or for her sake, that I may be somewhat more deserving of her.”

Lord William laughed at his romance, and, I remember, took advantage of his absence to try to make love to me himself ! But at this I only laughed in my turn, and, in spite of that common English mistake, which he fell into, in supposing that all unmarried females must be either maids or bad women, he was, take him altogether, I rather think about the best of the whole set ; and I am almost sorry I called him Lord Berwick’s Tiger. But what is an extravagant fellow to do, with high rank and little or no money ? And who was to drive old, stupid Tweed, *c'est à dire mon très aimable beau-frère*, up and down, without borrowing a trifle, or not a trifle, of his ready cash ? Some short time after my sister Sophia’s marriage she received from Lord Deerhurst, half a year of the annuity he had made her. My eldest brother was requested to call upon his lordship, for the purpose of restoring the amount into his own hand, which commission my brother executed without, I believe, exchanging a single syllable with that most disgusting nobleman, who ever has been a disgrace to the peerage.

Fanny, in due time, received very kind letters from Colonel Parker, although they were certainly less

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warm than some of those he had formerly addressed to her. Napier's love for Julia seemed to grow with what it fed on, and this fair lady had been twelve times with child, and was actually turned forty, or as the French say, *elle avait quarante ans, bien sommés.*

Little Kitty, the lady of Colonel Armstrong, went on very modestly and quietly with her dear Tommy, although he now steadfastly adhered to his former resolution, not to risk any increase in his family.

Amy continued very steady, and constant in her love for—variety!

We were all regular at the Opera House both on Saturdays and Tuesdays, and, when the performance had concluded, we always remained late in the rooms, amusing ourselves with the absurdities of George Brummell, Tom Raikes and various others, some better, none worse! Not that Tom Raikes ever did anything bad enough, or what is worse, anything good enough to deserve the honour of a place in these my invaluable *Memoirs*; but, since I have named him, be it further known that Tom Raikes is a merchant who went to Paris and picked up French; and he is something of a mimic too; and he can take off Brummell very tolerably, as well as the manners of the *vieille cour-France beaux*; but I never discovered that he could do anything else. His tricks, like those of the man at Calais who entertains travellers while they dine, by imitating singing birds, cuckoos and castanets, are very well on the first representation; but it is indeed heavy work to be thrown into the society of Mr. Thomas Raikes more than twice in one's life. Brummell often dined with him, and therefore I take it for granted that Tom Raikes lent Brummell money. If he did, it was even for the *éclat* of the thing, and to have it to say that Brummell had dined with him, and that Brummell, his friend Brummell, was an excellent fellow. Tom Raikes happens to be one of the meanest men in England, at least so I have heard from several of his *soi-disant* male friends.



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George Bryan Brummell.

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However, he was fortunate in having had a father who lived before him ; as that father was no less fortunate in having met with such a friend as Richard Muilman Trench Chiswell, M.P., to whom the family owes its not undeserved rise. To this Tommy we may apply the epigram written on another Tommy :

What can little Tommy do ?
Drive a phaeton and two.
Can little Tommy do no more ?
Yes—drive a phaeton and four.

Sophia looked very splendid in her Opera-box since her marriage, particularly when she wore all the late Lady Berwick's diamonds and her own to boot. Lord Deerhurst, I observed, for several successive nights made it a point to sit in a box by himself next to Sophia, and fix his eyes on her the whole of the evening. Not that he regretted or cared for her, but merely because, in his infinite vulgarity and littleness of soul, he gloried in insulting Lord Berwick's feelings, and conceived it high fun to ogle at Sophia's box, and then wink at his companions in the pit : but Lord Berwick was wise for once in his life, for he ever treated Deerhurst's low impertinence with the profound contempt it merited, nor condescended once to make a remark on it, even to his wife, although neither of them could have been blind to what was so very pointed.

To revert to the Beaufort story, *mais c'est perdrix, perdrix, toujours perdrix !*

The Beaufort story may be *fort beau* ; and yet my readers may happen to require a little variety : at all events, if they do not, I do, for there is nothing on earth I think more abominable than to be hammering always at the same thing.

CHAPTER XXIV

“ HUM ! ” said Alvanly, at a large dinner-party just as the soup was being handed round, in unusual but very dignified silence. “ Hum ! this company is growing dull—I’ll tell you a story, gentlemen and ladies. In the year fifteen hundred and seventy-two, there was a man, who——”

Here he was interrupted by the loud laughter of the whole party, for who could give ear, during the first course, to a story which began as though it was to last for ever ! Now the advantage of writing a long story, over that of telling it, is that one may, like a sermoniser in his pulpit, be just as prosy as one pleases, without any fear of interruption ; but, seriously, I will venture to vary this dry Beaufort story by whipping in a little anecdote, which occurred either before my acquaintance had commenced with that noble family, or after it had ceased, I forget which, but that is of no consequence. I professed from the first to disregard dates. Everything here mentioned or told of happened within the last half-century, that is quite certain, and more perhaps than you care to be informed of, especially in this place ; but I seriously declare, or rather repeat what I fancy I have somewhere declared before, that the careless manner in which these memoirs are written is all owing to my modesty ; or rather the fault lies between my modesty and my indolence. I do not like to take trouble for nothing, and I do not feel at all certain, that even the very best I could do, by my unremitting labour, combined with the most studious attention, would be thought worth the attention of the

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public. In short, when I consider the thing seriously, I am ready to throw down my pen in despair ; for how is it possible, I ask myself, in the name of common sense, that I should be able to scribble on one subject so as to deserve their patronage ? I should indeed have given the idea up the other day, had I not recollect ed a book called *Six Weeks at Long's*. The author made money by it, as his publisher told me, and really I do think that work rather more stupid than mine, or, to treat myself with more politeness, I think mine the more pleasant and more natural of the two.

Perhaps I should do very little better, were I to go through the drudgery of copying, and correcting, studying and cogitating and all the rest of the ings ; but however, if my readers only prove to be commonly civil to me and my maiden-work, they certainly shall hereafter see, but only in one volume, some of my very best and most studied composition.

The little anecdote which I proposed relating, merely to vary the story of the Beauforts, was about a prude, or rather a lady who went by that name. For my own part, I am miserably deficient in grammar, and a thousand more things, and, among many others, I am ignorant of the true, genuine, and real meaning of the word prude.

A French coquette will call any woman a cold, passionless prude, who, being attached to her husband and family, shows symptoms of impatience or disgust, whenever a chattering fool presumes to pour his regular, cut-and-dried, stupid flattery into her ear.

Some call a prude, a woman who steadfastly resists being kissed by a man for whom she has no regard, at a time when her heart is devoted to another.

“Pooh! Nonsense!” says the impatient reader, “A prude is a woman who sticks up for ridiculous punctilio s in such trifles as are of no real consequence.”

True ! But then I never yet happened to meet with this sort of thing. I have only seen base copies of it,

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in women without any real modesty, who affected excessive niceness ; but I cannot fancy a woman the worse, or the greater prude, for showing, naturally, any degree of modesty which she may really possess.

The lady I alluded to just now was nearly forty years of age, but she was still handsome, although she had entirely ceased to think about the adornment of her person. She was naturally sensible, and misfortunes had made her serious. The most delicate flattery which could have been offered from the lips of youth and beauty, would now have been extremely irksome to one who, having loved a good husband dearly and lost him, had for ever devoted her mind to other pursuits, as often as she could turn it from melancholy reflections.

I remember hearing this very excellent creature abused for being a nasty, stiff, tiresome prude, because she seriously assured a stupid, ugly fop, who was teasing her with the most insipid impertinence, that the style of his conversation was extremely disagreeable to her.

However, prude or no prude, this good lady was kind enough to receive my visits at all times with an appearance of real satisfaction.

We wanted to go to the play, for we were both in love with Elliston ; but we had no party and, what was worse, no private box. I have never in my life frequented the public boxes, and we scarcely knew our way in or our way out from that side of the house ; yet, when two women take a thing into their heads, it is not a trifle can induce them to balk their fancies ; so, after we had finished our dinner, my friend the prude declared that she was quite old enough to act as chaperon to me, and, going in our morning, quiet costumes, without rouge or ornaments, she was sure no man would dare to insult us.

“ In short,” continued Prude, for so we will call her, since I do not think it fair to make her real name public, “ in short, I never believe in such stories as women often relate to me about being insulted by

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the other sex. For my part, I have ever been in the habit of using my liberty and going where I please, and alone too, when it suited my humour, taking it for granted that, if I am decently and modestly dressed, and conduct myself with perfect propriety, it is impossible the men can mistake me for anything but what I really am ; and if they did, the frown of indignation which a virtuous woman can put into her countenance, cannot fail to awe the most determined libertine."

"*Nous verrons,*" said I, as I placed myself before the glass, to practise a frown of virtuous indignation, for that night only ! But frowning was not my forte, and I made such ridiculous, ugly faces, without looking in the least awful, that Mrs. Prude burst into a loud laugh, requesting me, in God's name, to leave the frowning part of our evening's entertainment entirely to herself.

I did not half like going to the play, without the protection of a gentleman or a private box. "It is all very well for you," I said, "but I have no character to spare!"

However, Prude soon overruled my objections and sent for a hackney-coach to convey us to the theatre.

We were quite delighted with Elliston in *The Honeymoon*. We could not, of course, obtain seats in the dress-boxes, in our morning attire, but we had good seats upstairs ; and, though the men did cast many a sly look at me, yet no one ventured to address us. Even if they had so presumed, I knew that my friend's awe-inspiring frown would set all to rights, *parce que c'était Madame, elle même, qui me l'avait assuré.*

I was at that time very striking ; for I never could pass anywhere unnoticed. I do not say this by way of paying myself a compliment, but merely to relate a fact, in which everybody who was then acquainted with me will bear me out. I always hated to be stared at by the mob, and I did my best to prevent it by the simplicity of my evening dresses, which were

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invariably composed of white gauze or muslin, and my head was always dressed, after the fashion of the Irish people's potatoes, *au naturel*, but it would not do. I often wished to be more interesting, and less remarkable ; *mais quoi faire ?*

"I cannot conceive why these men stare at you in this manner ?" said Prude.

"Thank you, ma'am, for the compliment," answered I, laughing.

"I do not mean to say that you are not handsome," continued my very liberal friend ; "on the contrary, I think your countenance remarkably fine ; but still I wonder why the people look so much more at you than at any other fine handsome woman who may be in the house !"

"God knows ! I do not thank them for their preference," said I, waxing half angry, as I observed the fixed, intense gaze of a young man, who, for the last quarter of an hour, had been eagerly watching every turn of my head.

He was a very fashionable-looking man ; but not at all handsome. I felt convinced, from that certain *air de famille*, that he must be a Stanhope, although I had never seen him before. It was neither Lincoln Stanhope, nor Fitzroy, nor that great, unlicked cub, who was turned out of his regiment for black-legging, or leaguing with black-legs. These three I had often met. It must be Leicester, then, thought I, having heard that Lord Harrington had a son of that name, who was less handsome than his brothers.

"It will not do to attempt frowning at that young man," said I to Mrs. Prude, "as it may have the effect of making him laugh, as it did you at dinner-time ; but I will fix my eyes on him with an expression of dignity, which is more in their natural character, and try if that will do."

The young man was not vulgarly bold nor impudent, and his eyes fell under my fixed gaze. He was not immediately behind us ; but occupied the second bench to my left. I had no objection to his looking

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at me modestly. In fact I rather liked it, being neither more nor less than a mere woman ; but I hate vulgarity or assurance in men.

I wanted to have another look at Leicester Stanhope, which I at last contrived to accomplish slyly. He is ugly, methinks, and yet I prefer him to any of the handsome Stanhopes, for there is something of better feeling and more expression in his eyes. I dare say this is not, in fact, the case, and that I merely preferred his ugliness to his brother's beauty, because he was the only one of the family who ever seemed to admire me even for an instant.

No, now I recollect myself, this is a libel on my own attractions ; I remember Lord Petersham, after having for several years been in the habit of talking to me, and shaking my hand with the same *sang froid* one would have expected at fourscore, one Sunday morning, when we crossed each other's path at Hyde Park corner, paid me the following most flattering compliment.

“ You are decidedly a very fine creature, but all that I have known for the last three years, and also that you are the wittiest, cleverest creature in London.”

Now Lord Petersham knew no more of my wit than that of the man in the moon, only it was the fashion to call me clever and witty, and whoever had said otherwise would have himself passed for a fool.

“ But,” Petersham went on, “ I will be frank with you ; for you are too spoiled just now, and too vain to be angry with truth.”

“ So that you will make haste about it,” interrupted I, observing that we were blocking up the road.

“ Well then,” said Petersham frankly, “ your charms never excited in me the least particle of desire till this morning.”

“ The fact is,” answered I, laughing, “ it required more wit than all the wit of all the Stanhopes to find them out.”

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"No, no, no," said Petersham, "I always thought you beautiful; but it was the style of beauty that never warmed me till this morning."

"Are you sure you have not mistaken me for the sun?"

"The influence of both at once are, at this moment, almost too much for me," Petersham answered, "and if you are the sort of spirited, independent, fine creature I have always heard you were, you will allow me to accompany you home immediately, as fast as our horses can drive us."

"Just the sort of thing I should like best!" said I, "if —" and I paused.

"If what?"

"If I happened to have a fancy for you; but, frankly, I have none!"

"Upon your honour and word, you do not like me?" Petersham asked, with evident astonishment.

"No, really," said I, "although you are very handsome; but you are not my style of man. I am not alluding to your foppery; a young man must ape something, and a polite fop is infinitely better than the heavy swaggering dragoon style, which I abhor."

"What is it you dislike about me, then?" Petersham asked.

"Lord bless us, how can you ask such stupid questions, Lord Petersham?" I inquired, somewhat impatiently, and then wished him a good morning.

To return to the young man we left staring at me from the back seat of an upper box, and whom I believed could be no other person than the Honourable Leicester Stanhope—it was only between the acts that I recollect he was behind me, being tolerably accustomed to this sort of thing.

When the play was over we were a little at a loss how to find our way out; but, after wandering up one passage and down another, we came to a large room, lighted well up, and, seeing so many people enter it, we concluded that we had only to follow them. However, we had no sooner made our appear-

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ance in it than we were led to imagine that every man we met must have suddenly lost the use of his senses. In vain did poor Prude practise her infalliable awe-inspiring frowns ! They did but excite merriment.

“ What, are you the bawd ? ” said one of them rudely lifting up her bonnet.

“ What do you ask for this pretty, black-eyed girl ? ” inquired a drunken man in a dashing light green coat, a red waistcoat, and large tally-ho pin in his shirt, touching me in the most indecent manner ; and, when I resisted these disgusting liberties with all the strength of my little hands, they only fell into roars of laughter.

“ Are there no constables here ? ” asked Prude, in a loud voice.

“ Bravo,” exclaimed a flashy-looking youth in top-boots, bearing in his hand a cane, with which he tapped an old constable who was near the door, “ I say, my boy, that woman insists on having you to go home with her ; but she is perfectly welcome so that she leaves me her daughter ” ; and he tried to pull my arm under his.

“ Good heavens ! what shall we do ? ” said I, while the tears of anger trembled in my eyes as I threw a hasty glance round the room to look for protection—and saw Leicester Stanhope, for it was really him, following us at some little distance, and shrinking back that I might not observe him, evidently half ashamed of the admiration he had evinced towards a woman who walked the lobby ! For it was indeed that most respectable saloon, in which Prude and I were making an exhibition of our pretty persons, owing to the merest ignorance.

All the world seemed to be in this room, which was something like the round-room at the Opera. How could we help fancying it was the right way out ? In short, we had tried and could find no other. It was immensely crowded, and, as we moved on slowly, every step we took exposed us to fresh insult, of the grossest and most disgusting nature, Stanhope

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seemed determined to see the end of it all, *à la distance.*

"How can that young man stand by and see two women so shockingly insulted, and not come forward to offer his protection?" said Mrs. Prude, observing Stanhope.

At this moment we came in close contact with some females whose language made our blood run cold. I hesitated, while I was almost tempted to interest Mr. Stanhope to protect us to a carriage: a horrible-looking, fat, bloated man, in a state of brutal intoxication, being actually about to thrust his hand into my bosom, Stanhope took a hasty glance at my countenance, and, observing it crimson up to my very eyes, he did, as by some ungovernable impulse, *qu'était plus fort que lui*, hastily place his person before me, as a protection, nay, almost in defiance of the fat man.

"I believe I am addressing a Mr. Stanhope?" said I to him, in much agitation.

Leicester bowed with an appearance of great reserve.

"Being acquainted with several of your brothers," I continued, "I must take the liberty to entreat you will either protect us to a hackney-coach, or employ some honest man to do us a kindness you see we stand so deplorably in need of."

"Is it possible that you seriously wish to avoid all this impertinence?" asked Leicester, in evident but gratified surprise.

Both Mrs. Prude and myself actually fell back a pace or two, as we fixed our eyes on him in speechless astonishment at his manner of asking this question.

"Do not you really know what place this is? Do not you know that you are in the lobby?" asked Stanhope, whispering in my ear.

"Oh, dear me! good gracious, Mrs. Prude, we are in the lobby, with all the very worst women!" said I, and I thought Prude would have fallen back in a fainting fit.

Leicester Stanhope politely offered me his arm, and

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hastened to convey us out of the house. He afterwards set us down in safety at my own door, requesting permission to inquire after my health the next morning.

For some weeks after this Leicester was, or affected to be, in love with me, and was constantly making up little parties to the minor theatres for my amusement. One night Amy caught a glimpse of us at some public place, I forget which.

"Kitty," said Amy to Mrs. Armstrong, "there is Harriette with a new man. I must go and call on her without fail to-morrow." I was consequently honoured with her early visit the next day.

"How do you do, Harriette?" said kind Amy. "I called to inquire after your health; because you looked rather pale last night at the _____. Apropos! who was that elegant-looking man with you?"

Having answered her first question, she begged to know when I was likely to see him again.

"Leicester Stanhope wants me to go to Drury Lane to-night, and has taken a private box for me."

"Oh! pray do admit me of your party," said Amy, "for I am so very dull and ill."

I understood her perfectly, and was well aware of two things,—first, that she would try hard to make Leicester fall in love with her, and, secondly, she would by various little spiteful hints, uttered in a tone of innocent *naïveté*, do her best to inspire him with contempt for me: but what did I care for Leicester Stanhope, or any one of his stupid race, beyond the mere pastime these attentions might afford me, *pour le moment*? Therefore I invited Amy to join us.

In less than a fortnight from that evening, Amy and Leicester were to be found ruralising together at a retired pothouse at Putney, or Clapham, or some such place, for their honeymoon!

I forget which of them got tired first; but I know one of them was tired in less than a week, and Amy returned to town and her dear variety.

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I too must return to my dear Worcester, whose noble father had allowed him six or eight months more to grow tired of me, during which time nothing very remarkable occurred, except that Worcester's love and passion absolutely did increase daily, although that was what I had imagined to be morally and physically impossible.

His Grace now became furious again, and so did his gentle duchess. Their Graces were both in town, and tormented Worcester hourly. The duchess often declared, in the presence of a female servant, who afterwards repeated it to me, that she should prefer seeing her son dead under his horse's feet, to his ever becoming my husband ! His Grace thought that we had been privately married.

Worcester was desirous that I should disguise myself, and go with him to Gretna Green.

"Have you forgotten the promise you made to your father ?" I asked.

"It was a conditional promise," answered his lordship, "and my father has broken the conditions. You see that he refuses to let me live on with you in peace, and again, and again, I must solemnly swear to make you my wife, whenever I can obtain your consent!"

Worcester was over head and ears in debt, and on this subject the duke was eternally lecturing, as in duty bound ; declaring for his own part he had never, when he was Marquis of Worcester, exceeded his allowance or incurred a single debt.

I do not mean to dwell on the subject of Worcester's love, and Worcester's devoted attentions to me, as I can conceive nothing more uninteresting. His love never varied the least in the world, nor did we ever quarrel.

We returned once more to Brighton, and after continuing there for about two months, Worcester's troop was ordered to be stationed in a small village near Portsmouth, to guard the prisoners.

Quintin offered him the choice of changing his

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troop ; but Worcester said if I did not mind passing a short time at a wretched little village, he would much rather not leave it.

I was perfectly willing to accompany him ; and, on the day appointed for our leaving Brighton, four post-horses were put to Worcester's travelling chariot, which was to carry me to our destination. The distance was about forty miles, and the troop with the Duc de Guiche, Worcester, and Lord Arthur Hill, were to rest one night on the road.

I never once entered the carriage ; but rode in a line with the officers dressed in my regimental cap and habit like a little recruit. We all lodged together in the same deplorable pot-house. Our bedroom served us for parlour, kitchen, and hall, and we dined together in the only spare room there was, in this apology for an inn, furnished exactly in the usual style of such places ; to wit, twelve immense, high-backed, black leather chairs, too heavy for anybody except Bankhead to move ; and the wainscot adorned with such pictures as a fox-chase, and then the Virgin Mary ; and, cheek-by-jowl with that holy woman, Bellingham, the murderer of Perceval ; next a print of King George the Third, in his parliamentary robes ; a county map ; the Holy Apostles, sitting at the Last Supper, and a poll parrot, done in what is, I believe, usually called cloth-work ; plenty of sand on the floor, and plenty of wine-glasses, tooth-picks, and cruets on the sideboard.

It poured of rain every day and all day long, during the first fortnight of our residence in this earthly paradise ; and we further enjoyed the most exquisite odours which had been accumulating, time out of mind, from beer and tobacco ! The weather also being windy as well as rainy, the sign-board, on which was depicted a flaming red bear, danced more merrily than musically at our window.

Here Worcester, once upon a time, laid his lordly head upon a large mahogany table, after wiping away the sour beer which fantastically varied its surface,

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and with infinite enthusiasm delivered himself to me in such soft words as, "Oh Harriette, my adored, delicious, lovely, divine Harriette, what perfect happiness is this, passing thus every minute of the day and night in your society! God only knows how long I shall be permitted to enjoy all this felicity; but it is too great I feel to last. Nobody was ever thus happy long. They will make my going abroad a point of honour; but even then, my beloved angel-wife will accompany me! Yet alas! how dreadful it will be to see you exposed to the dangers and inconveniences of war!"

I had a real tenderness and sisterly affection for Worcester at that time. I should otherwise have been the most ungrateful, callous, and inhuman creature breathing; and I really was about to make a very tender, warm, and suitable reply; but, at that critical moment, the woman brought in a large platter of ill-dressed veal cutlets and bacon, followed by the Duc de Guiche and the fat Lord Arthur Hill.

After our sumptuous dinner, Lord Arthur proposed our driving over to Portsmouth to see the play.

We went accordingly, and having hired a large stage-box, and seated ourselves in due form, all the sailors in the gallery began hissing and pelting us with oranges, and made such an astonishing noise that, out of compassion for ourselves as well as the rest of the audience, we were obliged to leave the theatre before the first act was over, and we were followed by a whole gang of tars on our way to the inn. They called us Mounseers, German moustache rascals, and Frenchmen.

I know not whether the sailors objected to the dress of dragoons in general, as being a German costume, or whether it was our French Duc de Guiche, who had caused all the mischief. However that may be, His Grace of Beaufort, having got hold of the story from the newspapers probably, declared, with his usual liberality towards me, that the English tars at Portsmouth could not endure the idea of my not being

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legally married to Worcester ; want of chastity being held in utter abhorrence among the crews of our royal navy, as a sin they have no idea of, and one which is never by any chance practised by them.

In short, the duke would not seem to entertain the slightest doubt that the whole audience, nay, the whole town, had been thrown into confusion and alarm by the appearance of so wicked a sinner as myself in so chaste a seaport.

The world indeed believed me a lawfully wedded wife ; and even the duke himself suspected that I was privately married ; but then my certificate ought to have been forwarded to the governor of Portsmouth before I presumed to enter the town, and then I should have been permitted to have witnessed the performance in peace and quietness.

Not to digress too long, being all four hissed out of Portsmouth with much *éclat*, we returned to our humble village looking rather wise at each other, and, for the next two months or thereabouts that we remained in that part of the world, we confined ourselves to quarters *parce que les plaisirs du village valaient, pour le moins, ceux, dont on nous régalaient à la ville.*

His Grace of Beaufort at last obtained leave for Worcester to join him at Badminton, and being, as he said, rendered perfectly miserable every hour that his son continued within the magic circle of my spells, he wrote to insist on Worcester joining him in a few days.

Worcester, when he read these commands from his father, looked as if he had received his death-warrant. He was indeed completely wretched. For my part, I also felt very melancholy and dull, under the idea that, somehow or other, His Grace was determined to separate us. I had become habituated to Worcester's society and Worcester's attentions, and was beginning to feel a very lively friendship for him. Such friendships are often more lasting and better than love ; and then I knew well that I should not again meet with half such kindness and devotion from

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any other man, for I never in my life yet heard of one, young or old, who was so eternally *aux petits soins*, and paid a woman the unremitting attention which I received from Worcester up to the last hour of our continuing together.

I cannot however say that I was sorry to exchange this miserable, muddy village for my comfortable house in town. Not but Lord Arthur Hill had something comical about his manner, which I thought amusing enough; yet there was no real fun nor humour in the Duc de Guiche, although he often laughed in much the same stiff and unnatural style as his shirt collars. He was not remarkably popular either with soldiers or officers, although he is undoubtedly a very handsome gentlemanlike Frenchman, and, as I have always heard, and been inclined to believe, a very brave one too. He was rather severe with the men and, I fancy, ill-tempered, and he was a decided fop, as I think I have before mentioned.

I remember the Duc de Guiche one day desiring Lord Charles Somerset's eldest son, who was a cornet in the Tenth at Brighton, to change the saddle on which he was riding, and which happened to be one of his father's constructing while his lordship commanded the district, and to substitute the regular regimental saddle.

The lad refused, declaring that he had been commanded by Lord Charles to use his own.

De Guiche was Captain of the troop to which young Somerset belonged, and it was the duke's turn to attend in the riding-school.

The duke, much incensed, would have put Somerset under arrest if he had not immediately changed the saddle.

The lad was very sulky, and complained in the evening to his papa.

It was afterwards reported to De Guiche that Lord Charles had made use of some hasty remark on hearing his boy's account of the saddle, and which amounted to the same thing as though he had

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declared De Guiche to have presumed to take an unwarrantable liberty. I will not say this was the exact expression, because I was not present; but Worcester assured me that De Guiche was miserably agitated on the following day, under the impression that Lord Charles had said even more than this, and in fact that his lordship had threatened in the presence of his son to put the duke under arrest. De Guiche, in short, not being able to call his commanding officer to account, fell sick from very vexation and pride of heart, and was obliged to keep his room.

The late Lady Charles Somerset appeared to feel much anxiety at the aspect of the difference, and requested Worcester to try and conciliate.

"Do, for God's sake, Worcester, go to De Guiche, and see what is to be done," said her ladyship to her nephew.

Worcester did so, and on his return described to me what had passed between himself and the handsome young Frenchman, whom he had just visited in his barrack-room.

De Guiche commenced by descanting on the military laws, and it was evident he had made them his particular study. It was natural for a proud, noble young emigrant like De Guiche, to have carefully acquainted himself with the duties of his profession, in order, by the strictest observance of them, to escape such reproof as his high spirit could ill brook.

Worcester admitted that young Somerset had been decidedly under De Guiche's command when he presumed to murmur, or rather refused to obey His Grace.

"*Mon Dieu!*" said De Guiche, in much agitation, or rather with suppressed rage, "is it the wish of Lord Charles Somerset that exception shall be made for his son of regimental duty?"

"Why no," answered Worcester, "my uncle, I am sure, did not wish that. Perhaps, though his lordship did not say so to me, yet I think it possible that, at the moment, he suffered some little hasty expression

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to escape him under the idea that, since he, who was an excellent judge of riding, and a commander here, had advised his son to ride on that saddle, perhaps Lord Charles expected, from your politeness,—but, I give you my honour, I have not spoken to my uncle on the affair. My own, and Lady Charles's friendship for you, alone induce me to interfere : but this I will venture to assert of my uncle, he has too much respect for military discipline ever to have desired his son to neglect it, and I am also sure that, if any remark was made it must have been spoken in haste and ought not to have been repeated to you."

"It is, in my opinion, just the contrary of that," said De Guiche, who spoke very good English for a Frenchman, although with somewhat of the foreign accent and idiom, "it is in my opinion exactly the contrary of that. If Lord Charles Somerset has used some expressions which relate to my government of my troop, or to any part of my conduct as an officer, he cannot, I should think, he ought not to make objections nor scruple to repeat again what he has said before, and, *écoutez moi, permettez*," observing that Worcester was about to interrupt him, "and, if Lord Charles Somerset, when he made use of remarks to my prejudice was, as you suggest, under the influence of passion, his lordship, if it give him pleasure to be so far condescending, will repeat that circumstance also, and in the presence of any gentleman he pleases."

"If you request me, as your friend, I will certainly acquaint Lord Charles with what you say," answered Worcester.

"I wish to inquire of his lordship respectfully, if he has objections to tell me whether or not he has ever threatened to put me under arrest ? If he did, I think he will not mind to repeat it."

Lady Charles Somerset was very fond of this young foreigner, and almost considered him as her son. Perhaps she rather expected he might become her relation one day or other, since he was always romping with her two bold daughters, who, as Worcester informed

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me, were to be found continually in a morning sitting on His Grace's knee, and allowing him to kiss them, and, as Worcester fancied, to do much more.

"I like your presuming to talk about Harriette," Worcester would often say to his ugly cousins, "when you are both ten thousand times bolder and more impudent, and more like . . . than she is, only you are both so ugly."

"Ah, that's right, scold them, Worcester," grunted out poor Lady Charles, who was at that time in a very bad state of health. "Do, for God's sake, my dear Worcester, keep those girls in order. For shame child! De Guiche, I will not suffer you to kiss and pull my daughters about in this way."

"Poor little thing, she is jealous!" De Guiche used to say, and then, to make all square, as Will Haught termed it, he would put his arms about the little fat Lady Charles's neck and kiss her with such vehemence that the good woman was half smothered.

But recollect, readers, and remember, my own favourite Lord Charles; but, apropos my lord, do you know what the king one day said of you and your spencer, and your trousers, and your—but never mind, inquire of Worcester, and remember, I say, that all I know about your wife and daughters is from what your nephew told me, who is, as you know, an excellent mimic.

I only wish you were to see him take off your lordship, when you are dealing for a horse!

But to De Guiche's story—Lord Charles, as I understand, made His Grace an apology and now my story's done.

One day, when Worcester refused to pass before De Guiche as a matter of etiquette, while the young Frenchman, who was then called the Count de Grammont, refused to move forward, in spite of all Worcester could say, I became quite impatient and tired of waiting.

"How is this?" said I to De Guiche, when, at last,

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we were seated at table. "Why do you hesitate to go first, if your rank is highest, and if it is not, how happens it that Worcester, who is generally so *au fait* on all these subjects, is mistaken?"

"I am, in fact, and truth, the *Duc de Guiche*," said His Grace; "but, since for some serious reasons, I do not take that title in England, and as I never expect to enjoy it in my own country, I consider it all nonsense; and, being called count in the regiment, it would look strange that I should take the precedence of Worcester."

Now I am on the subject of Brighton I must relate another little anecdote, which ought to have been mentioned earlier. Young Berkeley, as my readers may remember, during the last visit he paid me, which happened on the very morning of my departure from town to join Lord Worcester, for the first time declared, upon his life and soul, that, since he knew himself to be a much handsomer man than his lordship, he would contrive to be even with me, if I so far presumed to differ in opinion from his as to prefer the latter. What he said made so little impression on me that it did not even once occur to my recollection after I had left London, until I was reminded of it by a report of a very disgusting nature, which Augustus had taken care to circulate about town, till it came to Worcester's ears: namely, that the girl whom Worcester wanted to marry was an old flame of his and his brother's, and that both had often passed the night in my house.

Worcester appeared greatly annoyed at this wicked falsehood, and anxiously inquired of me what grounds there were for it.

I assured him most solemnly of what I now repeat with the same candour and anxiety, that I never gave the least encouragement to either of the young Berkeleys, Henry and Augustus, to pursue me; and that, for a length of time, they nevertheless both so haunted and both so persecuted me with what they

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were pleased to call their love for me, that in the case of Augustus I was very near applying to a magistrate for permission to be let alone.

"But, my dear Worcester," said I, "it will really not be worth while to give all this nonsense a second thought. You will have rather too much upon your hands should you resolve to vindicate and defend my virtue after the manner of Don Quixote; and, provided nothing is said against me or my conduct since I have known you, I think common sense points out that you had better leave the rest, to find its own level, *parce que je ne m'en suis jamais donné pour une grande vertu ; mais, tout au contraire, comme vous savez bien !*"

Worcester replied that my former faults, deeply as he regretted them, and sincerely as he prayed that they might now be for ever abandoned, furnished no excuse for the insult offered to himself, by such disgusting and improbable untruths as Berkeley stated to have occurred, at the very moment when his own most devoted attentions had proved unsuccessful.

I remarked that they were only joking, and everybody knows Augustus too well to believe one word he says on these sort of subjects.

"Write to him then," said Worcester, "and request him, if he has related this story in joke to contradict it in earnest."

I wrote accordingly, and Lord Worcester directed and sealed my letter, which was forwarded, and in due time I received an answer, enclosed to the Marquis of Worcester.

"**MY DEAR HARRIETTE,**" began young Berkeley, and then went on, with his usual, incorrigible duplicity and meanness :—

"The less said, you know, about the past, particularly when it relates to such scenes as you mention, the better, I hope you like Worcester, &c. &c.

"Yours, dear Harriette,

"Most truly and affectionately."

Lord Worcester immediately enclosed both my

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letter and the envelope addressed to himself in a blank cover, which he sealed with his arms and directed to young Berkeley.

In about a week after this letter was despatched, Henry Wyndham of the Tenth Hussars, who is the eldest son of Lord Egremont, called on Worcester, and, not finding him at home, requested to see me, of whom he made particular inquiries, as to when I expected him, or where he was to be found.

I told Wyndham the surest way for anybody to meet with Worcester was to remain with me : and being well aware of this fact, he sat down to wait for him.

I did not like to ask questions of Captain Wyndham, although I certainly felt anxious to learn what pressing business he could have with Worcester. His lordship came home in less than half an hour, and Wyndham, having requested to say a few words to him in private, was desired to accompany him to his dressing-room.

When Worcester returned to me he looked unusually pale and agitated. He informed me that young Berkeley had just arrived from his brother's country house, to demand an explanation of him on the subject of having sent back his letter.

"I must go with Henry Wyndham, who is waiting for me, directly," continued Worcester.

I was of course very much frightened at this information ; but, alarmed as I really felt, it certainly struck me that Worcester ought not to have acquainted me nor any other woman breathing with what had passed between himself and Captain Wyndham. However, right or wrong, the information served to agitate me most cruelly ! I first implored Worcester's coachman to follow and not lose sight of his master ; and then I wrote a hasty scrawl to Lord Charles Somerset, entreating him to prevent mischief, if possible, between his nephew and Berkeley. In short, I made Worcester's private business as public in a few hours, as though I had been employed for that purpose as town-crier.

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In consequence of my letter, Lord Charles Somerset sent down a messenger express, with a note to Worcester, requesting his lordship not to be too hasty; but to wait till he had been consulted:—"Be assured," continued his lordship, in this pathetic letter to his brave nephew—"be assured that I will advise nothing that can be derogatory to your honour!"

It was all smoke!

Worcester returned in an hour, and assured me that everything was amicably settled.

"How is that?" I asked, "has Berkeley been induced, by fear, to render me that justice, which he has denied to my earnest entreaty?"

"No!" said Worcester, a little confused. "He has not contradicted his former assertion."

"How could it possibly be settled then?" I inquired, merely for the sake of information.

"Why," said Worcester, "Wyndham assured me that the offence which Berkeley conceived it impossible to brook, was my having enclosed, with his letter to you, his envelope addressed to me, in which were written a few civil lines requesting me to forward the enclosed, &c. &c."

"Well?" I ejaculated in earnest surprise.

"Well," repeated Worcester, "I was willing to admit that his note to me, which was civil enough, I never meant to have returned to him, and, if I had done so, it must have been my mistake": and Wyndham assured me that, since I was ready to acknowledge so much, he had no doubt that the business might be arranged, this and this only being the unpardonable offence.

To make an end, the affair was brought to a conclusion.

I make no comments on a subject to which I cannot presume myself to be competent. The real facts being stated, and I believe Harry Wyndham will bear me out in them, the world may, and we all know it will, put what construction it pleases on the conduct of either or both parties. For my own part, I am not

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like those ugly women and cross old maids who abuse the world, or the world's judgment of my actions. Generally speaking, I have found the world act fairly, justly, and often, very liberally, towards me.

It is certainly, perhaps, a misfortune in many respects for a woman to become the fashion, which was my case ; for what second-rate man does not like to be in the fashion ? Nay, there are few, very few, who would not affect pride in the possession of what their betters have coveted in vain !

CHAPTER XXV

"I BEG you fifty thousand pardons," bawled Lord Petersham to me one morning from his or some other person's gay barouche, as I stood at my drawing-room balcony ; "but, to save time, will you answer me one single question from your window ? I only want a yes or a no as I am sure I can take your word."

My house being half in the country, I begged his lordship to make as free as he pleased.

"Did you," asked his lordship, forcing a little, mean-looking man, who was seated next to him, to stand up upon his two feet while I surveyed him, "did you ever see this man in your born days ?"

"Never, to my knowledge," was my reply.

"Then you can declare, at all events, that you never made his acquaintance ?" asked Petersham.

"Certainly, I can : and your friend will unhesitatingly confirm the truth of what I assert."

"*Tout au contraire*," said Petersham, "he has been amusing us with an account of a former *petite affaire du cœur* he had with you."

"He does me honour," I rejoined, "although he knows I was never so completely blessed as to have been in his society."

"That's quite enough," said Petersham, giving me a significant little wink with his left eye, kissing his hand, and driving off, all at the same moment.

I must now return to Lord Worcester, or rather to my house in town, he having left Portsmouth to join his incensed papa and mamma at Badminton.

"I have lost my parents," he wrote in one of his

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letters. "They refuse to acknowledge me as their son, and yet they attempt to keep me shut up here by force. This I should have resisted and have returned to you last week, but that my mother declares herself ill, and my father asserts that she is not likely ever to recover her late accouchement while her mind is so dreadfully agitated. For my part I can neither eat nor sleep, and both my father and uncle admit that they have tormented me till I am seriously ill. I implore you then, my adored, beloved, darling Harriette to come to me. I never close my eyes in sleep without awaking in the greatest fright and agony, having dreamed that you were taken away from me for ever."

He then went on to beg and entreat of me, if I had the least pity for him, to disguise myself as a countrywoman, or a common servant, in a coloured gown and checked apron, and go in the coach to a certain inn at Oxford, where he would contrive, unknown to his father, who should believe him in his bed, to await my arrival at past twelve o'clock at night, which he said was the hour at which the afternoon-coach got into Oxford. He then made me at least a thousand humble apologies for having wanted me to disguise myself and take all this trouble, assuring me that, if I went to Oxford in my usual style and character, some one or other would probably meet me on the road, and he could not describe what would be his parents' indignation and anger, in case my visit to Oxford came to their knowledge.

Were I to give my readers these letters in Worcester's own expressions, there would be no end to them, since every other word was angel, or adored wife, or beautiful sweet Harriette, or darling sweetest, sweetest darling, dearest dear, dear, dearest, &c., so perhaps they will prefer taking all these sweets at once, that I may proceed quietly with these most amusing and very interesting *Memoirs*.

At about three o'clock on the day after I had

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received this letter from Lord Worcester, as my sister Fanny was standing at her window, pleasing herself with her pretty little daughter Louisa, a hackney-coach stopped at her door, and out of it sprung a light-footed, spruce damsels, clad in a neat, coloured gown, thick shoes, blue stockings, blue check apron, coloured neck-handkerchief, cloth cap and bright cherry-coloured ribbons. In the next minute this bold young woman had given both Fanny and her daughter Louisa a hearty kiss!

"Good gracious, my good woman!" exclaimed Fanny, pushing me gently aside, and, in the next instant, hearing a loud laugh in the room, for I had not observed Julia and Sir John Boyd sitting at the other window, till they joined in our merriment.

"Lord help the woman," said Julia, "what can have put it into her head to appear this beautiful weather in such a costume?"

"It is a new style of travelling dress," said I, "and I am going to introduce the fashion. What do you think of my cap? It cost eighteen-pence. And my blue stockings? But I can't stay gossiping with you fine ladies or I shall lose my place in the stage. However, do just look at my nice, little, bran-new red cloak."

"You don't seriously and really mean to say you are going to travel that figure, and in the broad face of day too?" said Fanny.

"I must! I must! Worcester says if I don't want to be beaten to a mummy by papa Beaufort I must go to Oxford in disguise."

"Disguise, indeed!" said Julia.

"If Fred Bentinck meets a woman of my loose morals in this dress, *il croira que c'est la belle Madeleine!*"

"But where is your bonnet?" asked Sir John Boyd.

"Oh! I cannot afford to buy a bonnet; that would be only half-and-half, a mere vulgar, shabby-genteel, cockney kind of a maid-servant!"

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“ You will be found out by your tapering waist and large bosom.”

“ Why, what is the matter with it, Sir John ? Is it not very decently covered by this smart, coloured handkerchief ?

“ Yes ; but it’s all too pretty, and your stays are too well made.”

Julia’s maid-servant, who had not recognised me as I flew past her up the stairs, now entered the room, with a message from my hackney-coachman, who was waiting at the door.

“ The coachman, marm, desires me to tell the young woman that he shall expect another sixpence if she does not come down directly.”

“ Oh laws a mighty ! and here I hasn’t a got a six-pence in the world more than what’s tied up here in this here bag, on purpose for to pay my fare to Oxford,” said I, holding up a small red bag.

Julia’s maid-servant looked in my face, and seeing everybody ready to laugh, found it impossible to resist joining them.

“ Why, the Lord defend me ! Miss Harriette, is it really you ? ” she asked, opening her eyes as wide as possible.

“ You see, Sir John, the delicacy of my shape has not stood the least in my way with the coachman, who did not discover the air noble under this costume ! But I must be off directly.”

“ Good-bye ! God bless you ; mind you write to me directly, and tell me everything that happens to you,” said Fanny.

They all gave me a kiss round, for the form of kissing a woman in blue stockings and a check-apron, and I was soon seated in the stage-coach, which was being loaded at the door of the *Green Man and Still*, or as the Frenchman dated his letter, *Chez l’Homme Vert et Tranquil*.

“ You’re not apt to be sick, are you, my dear ? ” inquired a fat-faced merry-looking man, with a red handkerchief tied over his chin, who had already, with

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a lady whom I fancied might be his wife, taken possession of the two best seats.

I assured them that I was a very good traveller.

“Because, my dear, you see, many people can’t ride backwards ; and there’s Mrs. Hodson my wife as is one of them.”

“Oh ; the young woman is not particler, I dare say,” said Mrs. Hodson, with becoming reserve.

In short, not altogether liking the words “my dear,” as they had been applied to me by her husband, she thought it monstrous vulgar !

A lady, in a green habit, who was standing near the coach door, now vowed and declared her travelling basket should be taken out of the boot where it had been thrown by mistake, before she would take her seat.

The coachman in vain assured her it was perfectly safe.

“Don’t tell me about its safety,” cried the angry lady, “I know what your care of parcels is before to-day.”

“Come, come, my good lady,” said Mr. Hodson, whom I recognised as a London shoemaker of some celebrity, “come, come, ma’am, your thingumbobs will be quite safe. Don’t keep three inside passengers waiting, at a nonplush, for these here trifles !”

“Trifles !” burst forth the exasperated lady ; “are females always to be imposed upon in this manner ?”

“Monsieur le Clerc !” continued the lady, calling to a tall thin Frenchman, in a light grey coat, holding under his arm an umbrella, a book of drawings, an English dictionary and a microscope, “Monsieur le Clerc, why don’t you insist on the coachman’s finding my travelling basket ?”

“Yes, to be sure, certainly,” said the Frenchman, looking about for the coachman. “*Allons, cocher, Madame demande son panier.* Madame ask for one litel someting out of your boots directly.”

“Did I not desire you to mention, Monsieur le

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Clerc, when you took my place, that the basket was to go inside?" demanded the lady.

"Yes, *oui*," answered the Frenchman eagerly. "I tell you, Mr. Cocher, dis morning, six, seven, ninety-five times, madame must have her litel, vat you call —over her knee."

"I'm sorry for the mistake, sir; but it would take a couple of hours to unload that there boot, and I must be off this here instant."

"Come now, aisey there, aisey," bawled out a queer, poor Irishman, with a small bundle in his hand, running towards the coach in breathless haste. "Aisey! aisey! there, sure and I'm a match for you, this time, anyhow in life," continued he, as he stepped into the coach, and then took out his handkerchief to wipe the perspiration from his face. He was so wretchedly clothed that Mrs. Hodson eyed him with looks of dismay, while drawing her lavender-coloured silk dress close about her person, that it might not be contaminated. I was, indeed, surprised that this poor fellow could afford an inside place.

The lady and her French *beau*, seeing no remedy, ascended the steps of the carriage in very ill humour, and they were immediately followed by a man with much comic expression in his countenance. He wore a would-be dashing, threadbare, green coat, with a velvet collar, and his shirt collar was so fine, and so embroidered, and so fringed with rags, that I think he must have purchased it out of the Marquis of Lorne's cast wardrobe. His little Petersham-hat seemed to have been *remit de nouveau*, for the third time, at least.

"Lord! Mr. Shuffle, how do you do? Who would a thort of our meeting you, in the coach?" inquired Mr. and Mrs. Hodson, addressing him in a breath.

"Delighted to see you both," said Shuffle, shaking hands with them.

"And now pray, Mr. Shuffle, if I may be so bold, what might have brought you up to London? What antics might you be up to, hey? Are you

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stage-struck as usual, or struck mad by mere accident?"

"Thereby hangs a tale," said Shuffle.

"What! a pig-tail? I suppose you're thinking of the shop?"

"Not I indeed," Shuffle observed; "I've done with wig-making these two years; for really it is not in the nature of a man of parts to stick to the same plodding trade all his life as you have done, Hodson."

Hodson replied that he knew his friend Shuffle had always been reckoned a bit of a "genus," and, for his part, he always knode a "genus" half a mile off, by his thread-bare coat, and his shoes worn down at the heels.

"Aprepo!" said Mrs. Hodson, "by-the-by, Mr. Shuffle, you forgot to settle for that there pair of boots before you left Cheltenham six months ago."

"Very true, my dear lady," answered Shuffle, "all very true: everything shall be settled. I have two irons in the fire at this time, and very great prospects, I assure you, only do pray cut the shop just now and indulge me with a little genteel conversation."

"A genteel way of doing a man out of a pair of boots," muttered Hodson, "but I'll tell you what, Mr. Shuffle, you must show me a more lasting trade, of one with more sole in it, before you succeed in making me ashamed of being a shoemaker."

"And pray," continued Hodson, "where's the perpetual motion you were wriggling after so long? and then your rage for the stage, what's become of that? Have you made any money by it?"

"How is it possible," answered Shuffle, "for a man to make money by talents he is not permitted to exert!"

"Sir," said I, to the manager of the Liverpool theatre, 'I have cut my trade of wig-making dead, and beg to propose myself to you as a first-rate performer.' 'Have you any recommendations?' inquired the manager, eyeing me from head to foot.

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‘Yes sir,’ I replied, ‘plenty of recommendations. In the first place, I have an excellent head.’”

“For a wig! a good block, I reckon,” interrupted Hodson.

“In the second place,” Shuffle continued, “‘I have the strongest lungs of any man in England.’”

“That is unfortunately the case of my good woman here,” again interrupted Hodson.

“And, as for dyeing, sir,” still continued Shuffle, “‘I have been practising it for these two years past.’”

“Upon red and grey hair, I presume?” said the incorrigible Hodson.

“Sir,’ said the Liverpool prig,” so Shuffle went on, “‘Sir, our company happens to be at this moment complete.’ Fifty managers served me the same. At last however I got a hearing, and, as I suspected would be the case, was immediately engaged. The play-bills mentioned the part of Romeo by a gentleman, his first appearance on the stage; but it was a low company and beggarly audience, which accounts for my having been pelted with oranges and hissed off the stage !”

Hodson here burst into a very loud fit of laughter, declaring this was the best joke he ever heard in his life.

Shuffle, without at all joining in his friend’s mirth, declared that he had now resigned all thoughts of a profession, the success of which must often depend on a set of ignorant blockheads, and turned his thoughts to love and experimental philosophy.

“I say?” was Hodson’s wise remark, looking very significantly at his friend.

“Well sir; what have you to say?” Shuffle inquired.

“Blow me, Shuffle, if you ar’n’t a little—” Hodson paused and touched his forehead.

“Don’t meddle with the head, friend, that’s not your trade. Oh, by the bye,” Shuffle continued, “talking of heels, I want to consult you about a new sort of elastic sole and heel, after my own invention:

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one that shall enable a man to swim along the river like a goose, at the rate of fifteen miles an hour ! I have just discovered that the goose owes its swiftness to the shape of its feet. Now, my water-shoe must be made to spread itself open, when the foot is extended, and close as it advances."

" Well done, gentleman," interposed the poor Irish traveller, " this bates the cork jacket anyhow in life ! "

" Who the devil are you, sir ? " asked Shuffle, " and what business have you to crack jokes ? "

" The only little objection that I see to your contrivance," continued Pat, " is that the patent shoe will be just after turning into a clog as soon as it gits under water, good luck to it."

" The devil take me if that warn't a capital joke ! So well done, master Pat," said Hodson.

" Is that an Irish wig you have got on your head, Pat ? " Shuffle asked, by way of being even with him.

" For God's sake sink the shop, Shuffle, and let's have a little genteel conversation," said Hodson, imitating Shuffle's late affectation of voice and manner.

" Pray what do you Irish know about wig-making ? " asked Shuffle, disregarding Hodson.

" And may be you would not approve nather, of their nate, compact little fashion of breaking a head, perhaps ? " inquired Pat very quietly.

" Come, come, my comical fellow," said Hodson, " don't be so hot. Mr. Shuffle only meant to remark that it was a pity to wear a red wig over your fine head of hair."

" Arrah, by my sowl ! and is it under it you'd have me wear it ? " asked the Irishman.

" You're a funny chap ! but I loves to see a man in good spirits," Hodson remarked.

" Is it in good spirits then, you reckon me ? Sure and you're out there anyhow in life ; for the devil a drop of spirits have I poured into me, good, bad or indifferent since yesterday, worse luck to me ! "

" What, are you out of employment then ? " Mrs. Hodson inquired.

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"No my dear lady, in regard to my being employed just now, looking out for work."

Shuffle inquired how long he had left Ireland.

"Not more than a month, your honour; and four weeks out of that time have I been wandering about the great, gawky village of London, up one strate and down the tother, in search of a friend, and sorrow bit of the smallest intelligence can I gain, anyhow in the world, of poor Kitty O'Mara."

"And is that absolutely necessary?" I asked.

"And did I not promise Mistress Kitty, the mother of him, that I would stick by her darling till the breath was clane out of his body? and then, after our death, wasn't it by mutual agreement between Kitty and me, that we should dig each other a nate, tight bit of a grave, and bury each other, in a jontale, friendly manner? so that, what with disappointment, fatigue, and the uncommon insults which have been put upon me lately, sure and I'm completely bothered!"

"And pray, Pat, what takes you over to Oxford?" Hodson asked.

"Sure and I'm just going there, to come back again by the marrow-bone stage."

"But what reason have you for making the journey?" said Shuffle.

"Is it what rasin had I? Havn't I paid for my place more than a week ago, and havn't I lost a good service in them parts, by missing the coach by a trifle of half an hour's oversleeping myself? and did not the proprietor of this same coach promise me the first vacant sate?"

"Well, but having lost your place, why trouble yourself to go down when it is too late?" Hodson inquired.

"And you'd have me chated and diddled out on the fare as well as the service? Bad luck to me!" added Pat, with comic gravity.

"Blow me, if you ain't a funny one," said Hodson, as the coach stopped to set him down in a small village between London and Oxford; "and since

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you've put me into spirits, I must put spirits into you, so here's a shilling for you, Pat. In for a penny, as I says, in for a pound. Good bye, Shuffle, and I shall thank you to call and settle for that there pair of boots. Come, my good woman, give us your hand. Good bye, my pretty lass," nodding to me, as he and his better half quitted the coach.

Nothing of very great interest occurred during the remainder of our journey, except that Shuffle seemed disposed to hire Pat as his servant. The Frenchman found fault with everything at table, drank *eau sucrée*, and studied in his dictionary. The lady in the green habit scorned to address even a single syllable to a person in the humble garb I wore, and I never once opened my lips till we arrived at Oxford, and I was set down at a little inn nearly a mile distant from the one where Worcester promised to wait for me. It was almost one o'clock in the morning, it poured with rain, and there was not a star to enliven a poor traveller !

Though the discovery was too late, it was now very evident that I had taken my place in the wrong coach. What was to be done ? I inquired the distance of the inn at which Worcester promised to expect me ; but for more than a quarter of an hour everybody seemed too busy looking after the luggage and the passengers to attend to a poor girl in a coarse red cloak. At last I contrived to speak to the landlady, who assured me that I must be mad to think of wandering about the streets of Oxford at such an hour and in such weather ; that the passengers always used her house, and that in the course of an hour the other passengers would be served, and then the chamber-maid would see about providing me with a bed.

" Impossible," said I, " for I have a person waiting for me at the Crown Inn, and I shall feel much obliged to you, madam, if you will immediately furnish me with a guide to protect me."

" Protect a fiddlestick !" said my landlady. " I 've

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got no time to procure guides at this time of night, indeed ; ” and she waddled off after the rest of the passengers.

I was left alone in the passage, to watch my travelling-bag, shivering with cold, and wishing the vile red cloak and blue stockings at the bottom of the Red Sea, since it was to them I was indebted that everybody held me in such contempt. As a last resource, I addressed myself to a man in a dirty smock-frock, whom I imagined to be the hostler.

“ My good man, where can I procure a safe guide and protector, to walk with me to the Crown Inn ? ”

“ You’d better wait here till to-morrow morning, my dear,” answered the man ; “ for you see it’s quite at t’other end of the town, and a man don’t care to get wet for nothing.”

“ But I will give you half a crown, and thank you too, if you will only come with me directly, and bring a lanthorn with you.”

“ Indeed ! ” exclaimed the man incredulously. “ Pray how comed you to be so rich, hey ? Suppose you show us your half-crown ? ”

“ Willingly,” said I, taking one out of my little bag, at the sight of which he begged me to wait outside the door, till he joined me from the stable with his lanthorn.

“ But you must step out foot, my dear, as I may get home before mistress misses me, you see.”

As we hurried on together, while the rain fell in torrents on our heads, I felt half afraid of my strange guide ; and asked him every two minutes if he was quite sure he had not mistaken the road.

“ No, child,” said he, at last, “ for here we be safe and sound. This be the Crown Inn.”

I was not long in doubt as to the truth of what he said ; for, at the door, stood Worcester as large as life, looking eagerly down the road after the carriages. I put my half-crown into my guide’s hand, and hastily placed my arm under that of Worcester, who, so little dreamed of seeing me arrive on foot in such a wet

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miserable condition, that he pushed me rather roughly on one side.

“ My dear Mr. Dobbins,” said I, for that was the name we were to go by at the Crown, where he believed he was not personally known; “ Mr. Dobbins! don’t you recognise your dear Mrs. Dobbins ? ”

“ Good God, my love ! how came you alone this miserable night ? ” and Worcester handed me upstairs, all joy and rapture and trembling anxiety lest I should catch cold. In less than a quarter of an hour, thanks to his good care, I was in a warm bed and an excellent supper was served by the side of it, with good claret, fruit, coffee, and everything we could possibly require.

We talked all night long ; for we had much to say to each other.

Worcester declared that he looked forward to no hope nor rest until we should be really married.

I entreated him to consider all the inconveniences of such a match. “ Your father never will forgive you remember ! ”

“ That I shall deeply regret,” answered his lordship ; “ but I must and will choose my own partner for life. You and I have passed weeks, months, years together, without having had a single quarrel. This is proof positive, at least, that our tempers harmonise perfectly together, and I conceive that harmony of temper between man and wife, is the first and greatest blessing of the wedded state.”

I was too frank to deny that I perfectly agreed with him in this particular.

“ I was never happy till I knew you,” continued Worcester, “ and I am sure, as I am of my existence, that you are the only woman on earth to whom I could ever be constant to the end of my life and not break my oath. When all is over, my father must submit to necessity.”

“ It may not be,” said I, mildly. “ Nay, it shall not be. Your parents, harsh as they are towards me and my faults, shall not have cause to curse me, neither shall you.”

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Worcester was greatly agitated ; and, when all else failed, tried to laugh me out of my resolution. “ We will go to Scotland together, in the mail,” said his lordship.

“ And who shall be the father to give me away, and be a witness to prove my marriage ? ” I asked, merely to make a joke of a subject I was tired of treating seriously.

“ You shall wear this pretty dress,” said Worcester, “ and my coachman, Boniface, shall come down to the North with us to give you away. I dare not trust Will Haught ; he shall know nothing of our departure, till he has missed us.”

“ Boniface, of course, must be gaily dressed,” said I, “ and wear a large nosegay.”

“ True,” proceeded Worcester, “ and a white waistcoat.”

“ Shall the waistcoat be made with pockets and flaps, pray ? ”

“ Why, perhaps, that might look handsomer.”

“ Very well,” said I, “ perhaps pockets and flaps, perhaps not. Let that matter rest for the moment, and now, with regard to this long journey to Gretna Green to look for a dirty blacksmith, I think that really will be unnecessary.”

“ How can it be avoided till I am of age ? ” Worcester eagerly inquired.

“ Why, I have spoken to that most reverend, pious, and learned divine, Lord Frederick Beauclerc, on this important subject, and he declares himself willing to officiate on this occasion, and marry us privately by special licence, providing you agree to grant *les droits du seigneur.*”

Worcester inquired what that meant.

“ Simply, *les droits du mari,* for the first night.”

Worcester, having by this time discovered that I was only laughing at him, appeared deeply wounded and offended with me.

“ My love, what is to be done ? ” I asked. “ I, as your friend, your real friend, wish you to be comfort-

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ably reconciled to your parents, and, by making me your wife you lose them for ever, without doing me any material good ; for I have no ambition nor hankering after rank, and, I confess, my conscience does not reproach me with any particular crime, attached to my present, quiet mode of life, since I have no children ; else I should for their sake judge differently. Let us hope the best, enjoy the present, and be merry, pray, or I might as well have remained in town."

By degrees Worcester recovered his spirits, and, perhaps, there never was an hour during our whole acquaintance in which he was so devoted to me, so madly, passionately fond of me, as during my visit to the Crown Inn, which proves how the passion of love is ever increased by difficulties, till it, at last, acquires such a degree of enthusiastic ardour, as persons in the full, easy possession of what they desire can form not the least conception of.

Alas ! how fleeting are our moments of happiness ! Poor Worcester was obliged to leave me by nine in the morning, after handing me into a hack-chaise ; because he could not bear the idea of my being again addressed by any low man who might happen to be fellow traveller, when my dress would induce them to mistake me for a servant.

Just as I had got about a mile from Oxford, one of Worcester's uncles passed my chaise : if I recollect right it was Lord Edward. He stared at me in my old costume as though I had been the ninth wonder of the world. However, I hoped, since I had never in my life spoken to his lordship and merely guessed him to be a Somerset, that he would have remained at least in some little doubt as to my identity.

The next morning's post convinced me of my mistake. Worcester, in a very long, dismal letter, acquainted me that I had been seen, in a very odd, unladylike kind of dress close to Oxford. Worcester assured his father that it was quite impossible, as I certainly should not have gone to Oxford without

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acquainting him of the circumstance. The duke and duchess condescended to laugh at him as a weak silly dupe to a vile and profligate woman, asked him what good he fancied I could be doing by travelling about in disguise ; and why, if it had been good, I looked so confused, and appeared so anxious to hide my face from his uncle, as to have actually covered it with both my hands ? His uncle further declared that I was both deformed and ugly, which rendered his infatuation the more absurd.

Worcester, in reply, declared his aunt so very ugly that the man who had chosen her for his wife must for ever give up all pretensions to taste ; and then he asked them why they imagined two of the handsomest men of this, and perhaps of any age, Lord Ponsonby and the Duke of Argyll—my readers must excuse my placing Lord Ponsonby first—should have been so much in love with deformity ? And, if they were, it was of course a proof that my mind must have been of that superior cast as made ample amends for the defects of my person.

There were two young men at that time on a visit with Her Grace of Beaufort, who is known to have always encouraged a very motherly kindness of feeling towards young men, particularly when they were well looking. Perhaps she wanted them for her daughters ; and yet, that beauty soon fades is the cry of most moral mammas. However that may be (and I have not in the least presumed to entertain a doubt of Her Grace's virtue, according to the English acceptance of that word), the two young men I have just now mentioned, and who so vehemently joined the hue and cry against me, were Montagu, the eldest son of a lady in Portman Square, who used to give charitable dinners to the poor chimney-sweepers once a year, and Mr. Meyler, a young Hampshire gentleman, in the possession of very large West India property, of at least five and twenty thousand a year.

This youth had lately become of age, and, as everybody informed me, was very handsome. Worcester

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assured me that this young sugar-baker, as Lord Alvanly was pleased to call him, expressed himself in such strong terms of disgust in reference to me, that his lordship had been obliged to desire him never to use my name in his presence again.

Meyler however *dédommaged* himself with his favourite the Duchess of Beaufort, to whom Worcester had presented him when they were both at Christchurch together. He always agreed with that lady, as to the subjugation of her noble son's superior parts ; for, said Meyler, “ it would be impossible for any man, in his right senses, to be in love with that woman called Harriette Wilson ; she may have been better once ; but she is now in ill health, spoiled by flattery, and altogether the most disgusting style of woman I know.”

“ Are you acquainted with her, then ? ” asked the duchess.

Meyler confessed he had never spoken to me ; but added that he saw me every night in my Opera box, and in the round-room afterwards ; and, in short, from having often conversed with my acquaintances, he knew just as much about me as if he had been so unfortunate as to have been personally acquainted with me.

This inveterate abuse from a stranger, whom I did not even know by sight, somewhat excited my curiosity, nay more, my emulation perhaps ; *car j'avais quelquefois le diable au corps, comme aucune autre.*

“ If,” said I one day to Fanny, “ if all this abuse of me could be reconciled to good taste in a gentleman, and this Meyler is really so handsome, it would be worth while changing his dislike into love, *seulement, pour lui apprendre à vivre.* At all events there is novelty in being an object of disgust to any man, just when Worcester has so cloyed me with sweets ! Where can one get a sight of Meyler ? ”

“ Sir John Boyd is a relation or particular friend of his,” said Fanny ; and, on the first opportunity Sir John was consulted.

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“No woman can do anything with Meyler in the way of love,” said Sir John; “for Meyler really don’t know what sentiment means, and that is why I cannot conceive what he is always doing with that fine strapping woman, the Duchess of Beaufort, who appears never so happy nor so comfortable, as when he is perched upon a high stool by her side. Meyler is a mere animal, a very handsome one it is true, and there is much natural shrewdness about him, besides that he is one of the most gentlemanlike young men I know; but you may read his character in his countenance.”

“What is that like?” I asked.

“It is beautiful,” said Sir John Boyd, “and so peculiarly voluptuous, that, when he looks at women after dinner, although his manner is perfectly respectful, they are often observed to blush deeply, and hang down their heads, they really cannot tell why or wherefore.”

“And whom does he love?” I inquired.

“His affections are, I believe, at this moment, divided between a Mrs. Bang, a Mrs. Patten and a Mrs. Pancrass, all ladies of Covent Garden notoriety. Meyler is a hard drinker, a very hard rider, and a good tennis and a cricket player, prides himself on his Leicestershire stud and his old English hospitality, and he is no fool though he hates reading; and that is all I know about him, except that I don’t believe he would like to be constant for a single fortnight to the most lovely or accomplished woman on earth. In short, he holds all women very cheap, and considers them as mere instruments of pleasure, with the exception of the Duchess of Beaufort, whom he calls a paragon.”

“*En voilà assez,*” said I, “*de votre belle sauvage.* Perhaps you will show him to me some day, not on Ludgate Hill, but at the Opera?”

CHAPTER XXVI

THINGS went on worse and worse at Badminton, and I am now delighted that they did so, being altogether most miserably tired of the Beaufort story.

The Duke of Beaufort at last sent a notorious swindler of his acquaintance, who has since been confined in chains for forgery, one Mr. Robinson, who, as I have heard, had long been in the habit of doing dirty jobs for noblemen. Robinson declared that I had it in my power, considerably to relieve the anxiety and distress of mind to which I had reduced the Beaufort family, by returning all letters in my possession containing promises of marriage made by the Marquis of Worcester to myself.

“In short,” said Robinson, “if you will take an oath at Westminster Hall, that you have delivered into mine, or His Grace of Beaufort’s hands, every letter, or copy of a letter, from Worcester, now in your possession, you may make your own terms with His Grace.”

Though I never cared for myself, and I am afraid I never shall, yet, when one is dealing with a notorious rogue it seems silly to become his dupe: I therefore requested to have a week allowed me to decide. This time being granted me, because I would have it so, I consulted a most respectable counsellor, Thomas Treslove, Esq., of Old Square, Lincoln’s Inn, who had been acquainted with my family when I was quite a child and living with my parents.

Mr. Treslove, after reading Lord Worcester’s letters containing his repeated and solemn promises of

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marriage, at my particular request, declared, what I have no doubt he is ready this day to repeat, merely that he conceived the letters, if brought into a court of law, to be worth twenty thousand pounds to me, and, when I afterwards consulted Henry Brougham, Esq., M.P., of the same place, he entirely agreed in opinion with Mr. Treslove.

I inquired whether my situation, previous to my having been under the protection of Lord Worcester, made any difference ?

“ The court would not discuss that point, nor take it into the smallest consideration for or against you,” said Mr. Treslove. “ You have, for anything which can be proved to the contrary, in all probability been prevented from establishing yourself eligibly or comfortably in life, by having received the most solemn promises of marriage from the Marquis of Worcester. If, from the extreme generosity of your disposition, you, instead of hurrying the thing forward, wished his lordship to take time for consideration, you have the stronger claim on that family, supposing them to be people of honour. The duke has no witness of your having ever refused the marquis, on the contrary, you tell me, His Grace will not believe a single syllable of the matter.

“ Lord Worcester has, by the dates of these letters, been pledging his faith to you for the space of two years ; and, I conceive the damages, if he should now declare off, would be rated at least at twenty thousand pounds ! ”

The next day I had a second interview with Mr. Robinson, to whom I repeated the opinion of Counsellor Treslove, and assured him that gentleman was ready to put it in writing if necessary.

Robinson said that it would not be required ; for the duke expected all this, and indeed he thought that I might make better terms without exposing the secrets of a noble family in a public Court of Justice.

I promised Mr. Robinson that His Grace should receive my decided answer by the next day’s post.

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Robinson said this would not be regular, and it had better pass through his hands.

I begged to be excused, declaring that I must and would manage matters "in my own way"; and Mr. Robinson was at length compelled to leave me, although in a very ill-humour.

The following morning Worcester arrived in town, with the Duke and Duchess of Beaufort. Those worthy parents had again adopted the pathetics, finding it impossible to manage Worcester in any other way.

"My poor father is very wretched," said Worcester, "and my mother, when I left the house this morning, was almost in hysterics, because I will not consent to go abroad without you: and I never can nor will attempt it."

"Do you think they would feel happier if they were in possession of your promises of marriage?" I inquired.

"Certainly," answered Worcester. "His Grace would, in fact, make any sacrifice to obtain them, though in the end they could not serve his wishes, since I will never give up the hope and full expectation of becoming your husband."

"Poor duke!" said I, musing to myself after Worcester had left me on the pomps and vanities of this wicked world. "I have perhaps, though very innocently, been the cause of much uneasiness to him. Not that this matter is quite certain either; for Worcester might have, by this time, completely involved his father's estate. It had indeed been his wish to do this, but that I laboured to prevent him, and he is now only a few thousands in debt, owing to the very small allowance his father makes him. I have never done the duke or his family any real injury, and I never will; nay, I should like to prove myself anxious for their happiness, only their all being so severe upon me, and so very abusive, is such a damper. I will make the Duke of Beaufort like me, and regret his former severity," continued I,

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opening my writing desk, and after five minutes more deliberation, I addressed a letter to His Grace of Beaufort, as nearly as I can recollect in these words.

“ Your Grace has been very severe on me and my errors ; but, if you imagine they are of a nature to destroy your domestic comfort, I can easily forgive all the very harsh expressions which yourself as well as Her Grace, in letters I have seen of her own writing, made use of on my subject. I will venture to remind Your Grace that I was very far from seeking the acquaintance of your son. In short, but for such perseverance as I have seldom witnessed, I had never placed myself under his protection. I knew not that in doing so I was likely to destroy the peace of any human being. In short, if I had not respected yours, I had long since become your daughter-in-law. Having now inspired Lord Worcester with a very strong affection, something is surely due to him from gratitude, neither would my conscience acquit me if, out of respect for the parent I never saw, I were to act with inhumanity towards the son who would sacrifice all for me. I have pledged myself solemnly not to desert him at present ; but what I can do, in perfect good faith to Worcester, I am very anxious to perform for the relief of his noble father’s mind. I will not sell the proofs of respect and affection which have been generously tendered to me ; but as I conceive they cannot be put to better account than that of relieving the anxiety of a father’s mind, I have the greatest pleasure in forwarding them to your Grace, and am ready to take any oath that you may require, as to my now having enclosed you the whole of Lord Worcester’s correspondence in my possession or power. All I ask, in return, is to be considered by your Grace, with something less of ill-will, and that, for for your own sake, as well as that of the duchess, you will feel some confidence in the goodness of my heart, and in the sincere wish I do in truth feel, that your

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son may turn out all and everything you can desire.

“Only point out what I can do more, for the tranquillity of Lord Worcester’s parents, which shall not become a breach of faith and humanity towards himself, and I declare to your Grace that you shall never see me hesitate from anything like a selfish motive. I have the honour to remain, with sincere wishes for the happiness of Lord Worcester’s parents,

“ Your Grace’s most obedient,
“ and very humble servant,
“ HARRIETTE WILSON.”

His Grace of Beaufort never in any way condescended to acknowledge the receipt of this letter, which I carried myself and left with his porter in Grosvenor Square; yet the Beauforts were ever a high-bred race! But I conclude high-bred and well-bred must be two things, for it never could be well-bred of His Grace to refuse to acknowledge the above, to say nothing of the extreme selfishness and want of feeling of the noble duke, who, having obtained what he wished for the present, returned to Badminton, to which place he insisted on Worcester again accompanying him.

During another month, Worcester declared to me that his parents, relatives, and his father’s friends, persecuted and tormented him beyond his patience; and that young Meyler had begged him to leave me, as though he had been begging for his life, humbly entreating him to forgive the liberty he took with him, which alone arose out of his brotherly affection and respect for the duchess, &c.

Worcester generally contrived to get over to London every two or three days, though but for a few hours; and, when that was impossible, I went to meet him at a village ten miles on this side of Brighton.

One morning I received a letter from Worcester, so blotted over from one end to the other, that it was

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scarcely legible, and some parts appeared actually to have been defaced by tears. Such an incoherent scrawl I never had known him nor anybody else write before ! It was all over wives and angels, and eternal constancy, and eternal despair ; with miseries and tortures without end. In short, it was out of all compass miserable, and out of all rules, or direct right angles, or parallel lines. All I could make out of this scrawl, as certain, was that Wellington, at the request of Worcester's father, who had made it without his son's knowledge, had appointed him his aide-de-camp, and that go he must ; for there was no remedy, or it would be called cowardice if he hesitated. Nevertheless, he had sworn not to leave London unless he had been allowed to pass a whole fortnight entirely with me. This had been granted, and I was to expect him in two days after the receipt of his letter, which ended with earnest entreaties that I would promise to accompany him to the continent, and, lastly, his lordship informed me, that his father would arrive in London on the same morning with his letter, for the express purpose of attending a *levée*, and demanding a private audience of his present majesty, to beg permission for Worcester to leave his regiment and join the Duke of Wellington in Spain.

I knew not nor had ever suspected how much Worcester's loss would affect me until there was no remedy and my case desperate, for well I knew that I should never be permitted to follow up the army in Spain, even had I been disposed to make the attempt. I burst into a violent flood of tears.

It now struck me very forcibly that Worcester had deserved all my devoted attachment, and that I had not been half grateful enough to him. That he would lose his life in Spain I felt convinced, and that, since his regiment remained in England, I should have his blood on my head. What was to be done ? My crimson velvet pelisse, trimmed with white fur, and also my white beaver hat, with the charming plume of feathers, were spread out in my dressing-room

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ready for Hyde Park, and conquests. And poor Worcester perhaps might soon be numbered with the dead, food for worms !

After a second flood of tears, on went the red pelisse and charming white hat, and in half an hour behold me standing at the Duke of Beaufort's street-door, awaiting the answer to my humble, single rap, with a little note in my hand, containing these few words, addressed to the duke.

“ I earnestly entreat your Grace to permit me to speak a few words to you before you attend the *levée* this morning.

“ Your most obedient, humble servant,

“ HARRIETTE WILSON.”

When his Grace's huge, fat porter opened the door I made a desperate effort to conceal my tears, which had been flowing in abundance ever since I had read poor Worcester's letter, just as if I had received his dying speech ; and I delivered my little note, requesting to be allowed to wait for the duke's answer. The porter looked on me suspiciously : he seemed to be considering His Grace of Beaufort's moral character, as his eye glanced from my face downward, as though it had struck him as just possible that I might have come thus unattended, for the purpose of swearing a child against his noble master.

“ Are you quite certain that it is the Duke himself you want to see, and not the young marquis ? ”

I assured him that I wished much either to see the duke, or to receive an answer to my note.

As the man again looked under my large beaver bonnet, I felt the tears gush into my eyes.

“ His Grace shall have the note directly,” said the porter, in a tone of compassion, observing how I was trembling, as I really half expected the Duke of Beaufort would order one or two of his tall footmen to put me on the other side of the door. I saw the porter give my note to a servant in livery, desiring him to take it to His Grace's valet.

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“The duke,” said the porter, turning to me, “is dressing for the *levée*; so you had better take a seat.”

I did so, and, while I was almost choked with the efforts my pride caused me to make in order to conceal my tears from a parcel of curious, impudent servants, who for near twenty minutes, that I was suffered to remain in the hall, were eyeing me with very impertinent curiosity, the kind porter again addressed me, almost in a whisper, with, “Ma’am, your note has been put into His Grace’s own hands, and he is reading on it; so I dare say he will ring his bell, and we shall hear if there is any answer for you.”

I waited another quarter of an hour in a very miserable state of suspense, and in real, bodily fear of being kicked out of the house.

At last, as I sat with my handkerchief to my eyes and my face turned towards the ground, I heard some one, in a mild gentlemanlike voice call from the bottom of the stairs, to inquire if the person was waiting who had brought the last note? I raised my head, and seeing a handsome-looking man in a court dress, who appeared to be a very little older than Worcester, I grew brave, as I always do from desperation, conceiving everything was now lost, and that the duke had descended from his usual dignity for the purpose of seeing justice done to the orders he was about to issue for my being kicked into the street.

“Did you bring this note, pray?” asked the duke, addressing me, since his first question had not, it seemed, reached the dull ear of the fat porter.

“I did, your Grace,” answered I, firmly.

“Then do me the favour to walk this way,” continued the duke, opening the parlour-door, and closing it after him.

“What can he be going to do to me?” thought I, trembled from head to foot.

“My bell was broken,” said His Grace, “and, for the last ten minutes, before I came down, I could not make any one hear: but I assure you that I had no

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idea that you yourself were waiting in my hall. I conceived it was your messenger."

The least sound of kindness to one already so very low and nervous is enough to affect one. The tears I had made such efforts to conceal from the servants, would be restrained no longer and I was not, like the duchess on a former occasion, almost hysterical, but quite so ; and the more I laboured and prayed for calm, the more impossible it was to obtain it ; so, as I stood sobbing aloud, in the middle of the duke's large dining-room, with my handkerchief held to my eyes, the Duke of Beaufort and myself really cut two very pretty figures ! and I much wish Stockdale would get a print of it !

" I am not aware of your motive, Miss Wilson, for favouring me with this visit," said the duke.

And, as I attempted to apologise, my tears fell still faster and faster, till they quite choked my voice.

The duke seeing that mine was real agitation and not affectation, condescended to unbend a little.

" Sit down," said His Grace, drawing an easy chair towards me. " I beg you will sit down and compose yourself, and don't think it necessary to speak till you are more calm. I hope you believe that I felt very much shocked that you should have waited in my hall ? Upon my honour, I had not a conception of finding you there when I went downstairs, because I could not make anybody hear."

At length I succeeded in recovering myself, so far as to state to His Grace that, on the receipt of Lord Worcester's letter, I had felt so very much shocked at the idea of being the sole cause of his lordship being sent into danger, while his regiment remained quietly in England, that really I found it impossible to resist making an effort to prevent it, by proposing to His Grace to do all in my power to induce Lord Worcester to consent to our separation ; and even if I failed, rather to agree to go abroad myself and keep my residence a secret from his son, than that he should for my sake be exposed to danger.

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The duke declared that even had he been inclined to comply with my request, and he honestly confessed he was not, it was now too late ; "and really Miss Wilson," continued His Grace, "it was from the first folly and madness in you, ever to have fancied Worcester could or would have made you his wife."

"Your Grace still believes me desirous of the honour I might obtain by forcing myself on you as your despised relative ?" said I, indignation drying up my tears at the idea of being misunderstood, "and further you imagine that if I wished and would consent to marry your son I should fail to accomplish my designs ?"

"Certainly," answered His Grace, proudly.

"Duke !" said I, fixing my eyes mildly but firmly on his face, "you neither deceive me nor yourself by that assertion, for you know the contrary. I am"—and I felt my heart swell with something between grief and indignation—"I am," I continued, "naturally good, but you will, among you, harden my heart till it becomes cold and vicious. Since nothing generous, and no sacrifice on my part, is understood or felt, even when I would serve others, and while I only think of them you will not, or you cannot understand me. Allow me, then, to tell you, the fault is in your own character ; I will not say in your heart but in your want of heart."

The duke being of gentlemanly manners, to give everybody their due, sought to appease matters a little.

"I did not mean to hurt your feelings, I assure you," said His Grace, "perhaps I expressed myself improperly. I only wanted to observe to you that such unequal marriages are seldom if ever attended with happiness to either party, as witness Lord Egremont, and several more I could name."

"Do not trouble yourself, duke, since I am, and I always was determined not to marry your son; upon my word, I am ; and, if you again give me the lie, or speak to me as though you entirely disbelieved this positive

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assurance which has been repeated to your son so often, while on his knees he has implored me to become his wife, I shall say you do so because I am a woman, and cannot call you to account for it. Your Grace would use more ceremony with a man ; but my object for the great presumption of thus intruding on you was the hope of being able to suggest some plan, which would render it unnecessary for Lord Worcester to join the Duke of Wellington's staff. You have answered me on that subject, and I have now the honour to take my leave of your grace."

" Not yet," said the duke. " Pray stay till you are more tranquil. Shall I get you a glass of water ? "

I declared it was unnecessary ; but he insisted on my waiting, while he himself went into his dressing-room to procure one.

" Now I hope you are quite convinced that your being left in my hall was contrary to my knowledge, and gives me real concern ? " said the duke, after I had swallowed the glass of water he presented to me.

I bowed in acknowledgment of this apology, " I have spoken to Lord Worcester's father for the first, and in all human probability for the last time in my life," said I, feelingly ; because I really for Worcester's sake felt a regard and respect towards his father at that time.

" And if it should happen so ? " inquired the Duke of Beaufort.

" Will your Grace shake hands with me ? " said I timidly, and without presuming to offer my hand.

" With great pleasure," answered the duke, and, after shaking hands rather cordially, he himself conducted me into the hall, and called loudly to the porter to attend and open the door for me.

CHAPTER XXVII

WORCESTER came to town on the following morning, and all the duchess could say or do Worcester insisted on passing the whole of every day with me.

"My lord," Will Haught would say through the keyhole of our bed-room, "my lord, the duchess desired me to tell you that she has a great deal of business to settle with you to-day about, in short, about all manner of things, my lord."

"Very well, that is enough, Will," his lordship would answer.

In another hour this torment would knock again.

"My lord Her Grace looked rather displeased this morning. The duchess was almost in a passion."

"You be d—d! go along!" was the elegant reply.

"My lord," in another hour, "you see I'm tired of standing in this here room, and the duchess this morning—I assure you, my lord,—your lordship knows what I mean, Her Grace had got a very particular look in her face; you know, my lord, how she looks when she's vexed like, and takes on, you know, my lord."

"Go to hell!" vociferated Worcester, from the emergency of the case, although he had by no means the habit of swearing.

"I'm going, my lord," answered Will Haught.

Everything was arranged in a week for my accompanying Worcester to Spain. My female attendant was hired and my trunks nearly ready; but, as new objections continually offered themselves to this plan, Worcester was reduced almost to despair, and looked

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so miserably ill that everybody he met made the observation.

The army was not expected to be stationary. If I remained at Lisbon, I should see no more of him than by remaining in London. The misery and expense and privations, perhaps insults, I must endure, in my attempt to follow the army could scarcely be surmounted ; and Worcester could not deny that I should make a coward of him ; that fight he could not, supposing I might be suffering under sickness or difficulty. At last, it was finally decided, between us, as a thing impossible. We must then be separated for one year, since there is no remedy ; "but," said Worcester, "I shall declare to my father, that at the end of that time we will part no more. He has implored me to make a trial of a year's absence, and I have consented ; but, in twelve months from the day I leave you, supposing I am not on my road to join you in England, remember you are to come to me."

This I promised, should the thing be practicable.

At all events, no power on earth, he solemnly vowed and declared a thousand times over, and as solemnly wrote it down, that neither man nor devil should separate us longer than twelve months, during which time my last kiss was to be virgined on his true lip.

"If ever you prove false to me, or I to you, let all inconstant men be called Ponders, and all false women, Cressids," said Worcester, or he ought to have said so. In short, he spoke to this effect, only he spoke more strongly ; for, in his zeal, I believe, he hoped we might both go where he had sent Will Haught, if ever we were inconstant ; and, yet, he was leaving his beloved, surrounded with spies and flatterers of the duke, in the gay city of London.

"Never mind, my love," said I, "for, if my residing in the metropolis makes you miserable, I'll go and bury my wonderful charms in a village and so immortalise it for ever !"

But Worcester declared that all the comfort he

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was capable of feeling at that moment, was my honour.

"*Mais, ne sais-tu pas que je l'ai perdu?*" I inquired.

"*N'importe. Si je place ma confiance, mon ange! c'est en toi,*" said Worcester.

All this joking on serious and affecting matters is really in monstrously bad taste! I cannot conceive how I can be guilty of such heartless unfeeling behaviour! I, who condoled so pathetically both in the crim. con. cases of Lord Boringdon, whom Ponsonby used to call the Boring Don, and Sir William Abdy, when those excellent and abused husbands took their tea with me expressly, as they both declared, because I was a woman of such acute feelings; but, after all, being now in the daily habit of meeting this profligate Marquis of Worcester about Paris, with the sister of his late wife, and seeing him look as if he did not even know me by sight, while I often forget, until he has passed, where or when I have seen that man before, the face being familiar, and, perhaps, the name even forgotten—"Oh, by-the-bye!" I say to myself, if I meet him a second time in the same morning, "now I think of it, that long-nosed tall man is Worcester." And just in this way does his own treacherous memory no doubt treat his own "dearest dear; own beloved! ever adored, and ever to be adored! delicious! sweet! darling! wife! Harriette."

Tant ces choses la fâchent, quand on y pense! mais, ainsi va le monde! C'est dommage! Quoi faire? and how can one write pathetically on such trifling subjects? But, nevertheless, I beg my readers to understand, and believe that, though I was never in love with Worcester in my whole life, yet I was at one time much too grateful, and too much attached to him, ever to feel the slightest wish to be unfaithful even in thought, and, with his ardour on one side, and my friendly civility on the other, we certainly jogged

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on very well together; for I am, as I believe all my friends will admit, so warm-hearted naturally that my mere friendship is quite a match for many women's love. I am sure I always folded Worcester's neck handkerchiefs for him with my own hands, because he declared nobody else understood them: and besides this, I, every Monday morning of my life, read the housemaid a lecture about keeping his dressing-room free from dust! *Qu'est ce qu'il voulait donc?*

Worcester declared that he would not leave me, until his father would make me an allowance, at least during his absence from England. For this purpose, about three days previous to his departure, he brought Mr. Robinson, as he said, from the Duke of Beaufort.

Robinson declared that anything Worcester could sign, by way of annuity or allowance, would be good for nothing; "but," he continued, "I am come to pass my word, in the Duke's name, that the allowance Worcester requires for you shall be paid to you, in regular quarterly payments, after all your house debts, &c., have been discharged."

"Of course, Worcester, I may trust to this assurance made in your presence?" I inquired.

Worcester was sure his father would act up to his engagements, and I, being in grief, and naturally careless in money-matters, believing, too, that I was in the power of gentlemen, and gentlemen of strict honour, assured them I was under no alarm, and never expected to be left to starve, while I endeavoured to do my duty, and then the subject dropped.

On the last day we passed together we certainly shed a superabundance of tears. Poor Worcester was half blinded with his: and, seriously, a man going to be hanged could not well have appeared more disengaged or dismayed.

"I will write at least a quire of foolscap to you every day," said Worcester, "and may God bless my

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adored wife, and bless me only just as I am found ready to sacrifice my life for her happiness." In short, but for Lord William Somerset, who absolutely dragged him out of the house a few minutes before the Falmouth mail started, I almost believe he would have preferred love to glory and given old Wellington the slip.

I passed the night entirely without rest, in spite of all the efforts I made to recover my spirits. "He is gone. Nothing can bring him back. Well, should he not be killed, it is a good thing for a young man to see a little service. It wont do for me to lose all my life in fretting." And fifty more such wise remarks did I repeat to myself during the long night, and yet I could not forget poor Worcester's extreme kindness and attachment.

In two days more I was visited by Robinson, who used every argument in his power to convince me of the folly of ever expecting to live with Worcester again.

"Why not act with common sense?" said Robinson. "There is His Grace of Beaufort ready to provide for you in the most comfortable manner possible for your whole life, in short, as I told you before, you may make your own terms, conditionally that you never speak or write to his lordship again."

I begged Mr. Robinson not to lose his time in teasing me when I was out of spirits. "Pray acquaint the duke that Worcester refused to leave England until I had solemnly pledged myself to write to him constantly, and wait for him a year from the day of his departure, and then tell me if the duke commands me to break my written oath and ill-use his son?"

"If he does, will you do it?" Robinson asked; but, considering this an impertinent question I refused to answer it, and again the worthy man went away in very ill-humour, declaring that for his part he could not treat with me.

Fanny was my constant visitor after Worcester had left England, and did all in her power to amuse and

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enliven me. Worcester had promised to make the acquaintance of Colonel Parker in Spain, and send her word how he went on, whom he made love to, and in short, all the news about him he could possibly scrape together. Fanny was very grateful to his lordship for having himself suggested this plan to her. She was still living with Julia, and Julia was yet beloved and adored by Mr. Napier, who might have been her son in point of age and appearance.

My opera-box had been engaged for that season, and paid for, before Lord Worcester thought of being ordered off to the continent, and Fanny and Julia had each of them purchased a ticket from me ; yet I did not like the idea of going there without his lordship. I knew I should feel dull, and that the duke and duchess, whose box was opposite mine, would make their observations on whatever I did, and might report mere nothings in a way to disturb poor Worcester's feelings.

"I will not go to-night," said I, in answer to Julia's pressing entreaties, and I kept my word.

I received, by the earliest occasion, a very long letter dated Falmouth from Lord Worcester, who regretted, of all things, being detained perhaps for several days longer in England. To be still in the same country with his adored, beautiful wife, and yet know that we could not again meet for a year, was what affected him more than he could possibly describe, &c. ; but really, love-letters are all so much alike that it may be as well to refer my readers to Mr. Charlton's, or to those Lord Charles Bentinck addressed to Lady Abdy, they being already printed and published, and consequently come-at-able by all my gentle readers.

The following Saturday's Opera was expected to be unusually brilliant. All the fashionable world were in town : there was a new ballet too, and a new French dancer ; and Fanny declared it to be the height of folly to have paid two hundred guineas for an opera-box without making use of it.

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“ Well,” said I, “ since Worcester cannot well be shot by the enemy previous to his reaching headquarters, I may as well take the opportunity of seeing two or three more ballets; for, as to indulging in gaieties while a parcel of shots are flying about his head or across his brain is not in my nature.” This last was, by-the-bye, a very foolish idea, but a nervous woman will often fancy impossibilities, and that was my case. However, I determined to cut all public amusements as soon as I knew Worcester to be in contact with the enemies of old England.

We were all three unusually well dressed on that evening, for our finery was new and we humbly hoped in very good taste. On this night too, I may say without flattering myself, that there was no lack of humble servants and devoted pretenders among the gentlemen in waiting, who crowded about me, believing, of course, that, in the absence of my jealous lord, it would be no difficult matter to obtain favour in my sight, and, whether I was the style of woman they liked, or just the reverse, still it was always worth while cutting out a man who had been so proverbially in love as Worcester. No doubt, argued such tasteless beings, who for their own part saw nothing at all remarkable about me, no doubt she must improve wonderfully on acquaintance: at all events, it is worth trying what she is like. In short, if it had been possible to have turned my head by flattery, *il y avait vraiment, de quoi*; and it has been remarked by several persons in high life, who knew the world well, that it would have been easy for me to have secured at that period not less than a dozen annuities.

Amy was rather gay too that season, in her box next to mine, and the Honourable Berkeley Paget had cut his wife and all his family to accompany her, by her particular desire, about the streets and in all public places. In short, he lived in the same house with her and seldom quitted her for an instant. Everybody cried out shame, and some few such very moral men as the Duke of York actually cut him

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dead, and refused to receive him at Oatlands even on public nights : for, said His Royal Highness, "A man ought to be of royal blood before he presumes to commit adultery, except in private, like Lords Cowper and Maryborough."

Fanny and Julia were both looking remarkably well, and many a beau turned his head wishfully towards our box, anxiously waiting to observe a vacancy for one.

Brummell, Lord William Russell, Frederick Bentinck, Lord Molyneux, Captain Fitzclarence, Lord Fife, Duc de Berri, Montagu, Berkeley Craven, and God knows how many more, were our visitors.

A young man, whose name I have forgotten, came to request the favour of being allowed to present Mr. Meyler to me.

This Meyler was the young, rich, Hampshire gentleman who, Worcester assured me, had professed to entertain such a violent dislike towards me. Both Fanny and I at once concluded that he wanted to come to me as a spy, either at his favourite's, the Duchess of Beaufort's suggestion, or his own.

"Don't see him," said Fanny, "I am sure he will make mischief."

For my part, as I have before informed my readers, *j'avais de temps en temps le diable au corps*, and I liked the description Sir John Boyd had given me of that young gentleman's style of beauty and expression, and I was, besides, rather curious to see how such a man would set about disliking me !

"No doubt," thought I, "since Meyler is such a mere profligate, he proposes succeeding with me at once, merely to laugh at me afterwards, and acquaint Worcester what a loose woman I am. He may not be aware that I know him to be the friend of Worcester's family."

Having made all these wise reflections to myself while the young man chatted with Julia, I addressed him to inquire what sort of a person he intended introducing to me.

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"Oh, a charming, beautiful youth, whom all the ladies are in love with," was the reply; and I desired him to bring Mr. Meyler to me immediately.

He took me at my word, and soon returned to present to our notice a man, certainly of a very interesting appearance, and with a most expressive countenance. His manner too was particularly unaffected and gentlemanlike, and the tones of his voice were very sweet: nevertheless, it was easy to discover, in spite of his naturally good breeding, that he held me rather cheap.

In short, to put the idea of respect to me out of the question, he attempted to give me a kiss, as we descended the stairs together; but, though I refused decidedly, it was done rather coquettishly, on purpose that he might induce to renew the attack at some future day, with a little more ceremony.

"There would be no merit," I thought, "for Worcester, or the duchess, to learn that I had declined giving encouragement to such abrupt impertinence from a wild young rake, who was known to care for no woman breathing beyond the moment."

"Meyler is a beautiful creature," thought I to myself when stepping into bed; "I wonder if he ever will really know how to love a woman during his lifetime? If he were to be in love, what a bright glowing countenance he possesses for expressing that or indeed any other passion!" Still it was all nothing to me. Poor Worcester was going into danger for my sake, and for mine alone, and sure I was as of my life, that it was not in my nature to carry on a sly intercourse with another man: and there was a year to wait according to my oath, and Meyler, in that time, would have passed over at least five hundred little caprices—and then, to crown all, he could not endure me, and only visited me for the honourable purpose of proving how very cheap he had held me!

This idea settled me for that night, at least, and I fell asleep without dreaming of Meyler, and awoke almost without recollecting his existence.

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At three o'clock in the day, my servant announced a gentleman, who refused to send up his name, merely saying that he lived in Grosvenor Square, and wanted to speak to me.

I was about to insist on knowing who my visitor was before I admitted him, when the idea struck me, as just possible, and I requested he might be shown upstairs.

It was the Duke of Beaufort!

I was surprised at receiving a visit from His Grace, and still more so when I found that he really had nothing particular to say to me. He hesitated a good deal, looked rather foolish, and wished, for my own sake as well as his son's, that I would abandon all hopes and leave off corresponding with his son.

"Duke," said I, interrupting him, "was it not your first and most anxious wish that Worcester should go abroad?"

"It was."

"Well then, Lord Worcester positively and absolutely refused to leave London, until I had pledged myself in the most solemn manner to continue faithfully his, and not place myself under the protection of any other man for one twelve-month from the day he should leave England. Do you still ask me to break my oath?"

The Duke, from very shame perhaps, was silent, and stood against my door fidgeting and hesitating, as though he would have proposed something or other, but that he wanted courage.

After a long pause, he suddenly, and with abruptness, said, "Who makes your shoes?"

I fixed my eyes upon His Grace in unaffected astonishment at this irrelevant question.

"We will say nothing of the feet and the ankles," continued His Grace.

This compliment was so very unlooked for from such a quarter, and struck me so very odd, that I felt myself actually blushing up to the very eyes, and I immediately changed the conversation from

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my feet and ankles to the young marquis and the Peninsula.

His Grace, when he took his leave of me, had made no single proposal nor said one single word which could in any way assist my guess as to why he did me the honour to call on me.

I received two more very long letters from Falmouth: the last was written in despair, agony of mind, &c., to use Worcester's own words, and put into the post on the very eve of his lordship's sailing for Lisbon.

On the following Saturday, just as I was seated in my opera-box, Meyler occurred to me again for the first time, and I was rather curious, at least, to know whether he meant to visit me any more. Perhaps I was half desirous that he should. It is true he could be nothing to me, and besides he was so abominably cool and impertinent, and then he had declared that he thought me anything but desirable. Still, I told Fanny, I should like to have one more look at him before I died or retired into the country, merely to ascertain if the expression of his countenance was really as beautiful as it had struck me to be at first sight.

Fanny declared that it was very wicked of me to wish anything whatever about the matter; but Julia said, Meyler had if possible a more delicious face than even her own adored Harry Mildmay; and, for her part, she candidly owned he had but once to put the question to her, and alas, poor Napier!

However, Fanny might have spared her sermon, since neither Julia's virtue nor mine was put in any sort of danger; for all the notice Meyler took of either of us, was through his opera-glass as he sat in the Duchess of Beaufort's box.

Considering that by this time Meyler really disliked me, I began to sympathise with him in his feelings; and, having determined to cut him wherever we might hereafter meet, I amused myself with talking to half the gay world, careless of everything but time present.

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Julia, having paid Amy a visit in her box, and mentioned to her that I thought Meyler very beautiful, Amy immediately despatched the first man she could find of his acquaintance, to invite him to her supper after the Opera.

I declared to Julia, if that was the case, I would not go to Amy's, as I had taken a disgust at the idea of meeting Mr. Meyler: and I retired to bed immediately on leaving the theatre.

I passed much of my time in scribbling every little event which occurred, to Worcester, and the rest, mostly with Fanny and Julia, having changed my residence to one which was within a few doors of Julia's.

Meyler, as Amy afterwards informed us, did not attend to her invitation.

CHAPTER XXVIII

ONE Tuesday night, as Julia was not ready nor had even begun to dress when I called for her, I went to the Opera alone. Judge my surprise on entering my box, to find the front fully occupied by two immensely fat city-sort of ladies, and an elderly stupid-looking man in powder.

"There must be some mistake, I fancy," said I civilly.

"How do you mean, madam?" "asked the powdered man.

"This is my private box, and you may see my name on the outside of it."

The party in great haste produced three bone-tickets, which they had purchased for eight shillings each at Mr. Ebers's.

"They are the three tickets I am in the habit of disposing of every night. Lady Castlereagh does the same thing; but nobody ever thinks of intruding their society on me here. The tickets are sold for the pit."

"For the pit indeed!" said one of the ladies with indignation, "the pit! whoever heard tell of such a thing! You're much more fitter ma'am, for aught I know, to go into the pit yourself than we are. Is our dress a pit-dress or a gallery-dress ma'am?"

"I fancy, madam, you are thinking of the play or Astley's. You are not accustomed to the Opera I see, or you would not fancy anything too fine for the pit. I assure you, you will all three cut a brilliant figure there," said I.

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A little Captain Churchill, of the Guards, came into my box at this moment, and opened his little eyes as wide as his astonishment could stretch them, at seeing my party.

"Mr. Churchill, these two ladies have bought my tickets of Ebers, and they insist on taking up the front of my box."

"Oh madam," said Churchill, addressing the eldest, "you really must not expect to make such a very magnificent appearance for only eight shillings."

"Silence!" said the fat, powdered gentleman with dignity, and Churchill stared impudently in his face and burst out into a laugh.

"This is unwarrantable conduct, sir," said the stranger, "and I must call the box-keeper, if you hinder my whole party from witnessing the performance."

"Excellent! Upon my word, capital! We are really very much obliged to you all for being such monstrous good fun," said Churchill, holding his sides.

"Box-keeper!" roared out the powdered man, and one of them immediately attended his summons. "These people are a great nuisance, box-keeper, and they want to make us believe that we have no right to sit in our own box!"

"Excuse me, sir," said the man, "this box belongs to this lady. It is Miss Wilson's own private property."

"And pray are not these the tickets of this box?" the stranger inquired.

"They certainly are," replied the man, "and I have no right to refuse you admittance; but it is a regular, understood thing, when ladies dispose of their tickets they are for the pit."

"Don't tell me about your regular, understood thing," said the enraged gentleman. "We have come up to town on purpose to witness an Italian Opera, and we have procured tickets for this box. Now I'll tell you what, young man, if you don't make these

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people silent, I shall apply to a constable and insist on having them turned out."

"Oh! how very good!" said Churchill, again laughing, and looking at the party through his glass.
"Did you all three come up by steam, or how?"

The box-keeper vainly endeavoured to look serious, while informing them that he really could not take upon himself to request me or my friend to be silent, when we were inclined to converse or laugh in my own box, as it was what everybody did; and many went there for no other purpose but to chat with their friends.

I requested the box-keeper to send Ebers to me, while the fat ladies were turning up their eyes, and throwing out contemptuous remarks on the man for having attempted to impose on them with such an improbable story as that of people putting themselves to the expense of going to the King's Theatre, when they only wanted to converse and had no wish to see the performance.

"Let us make ourselves so disagreeable to them, that they will be glad to go," said I, in French, which language, from their stupid faces, I concluded they had not studied.

"I have been trying that plan for the last ten minutes," answered Churchill; "but, how can *la belle Harriette* ever expect to succeed in disgusting others?"

"You shall see," said I, "although I am going to be very vulgar; but the case is desperate, for it is death to be stuck behind these fat people, and I shall be quizzed and laughed at for a month, for changing my two sister-graces, whom I expect every minute, for these two furies." I then fixed my eyes steadily on the ladies' finery, particularly their head-dresses, and, immediately afterwards chattered and laughed, in order to seem as if I was talking at them, although we never once mentioned them. Then Churchill would take a peep at their feet, and laugh again louder than ever.

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“Insufferably impertinent!” said the youngest lady, fanning herself violently; but still they kept their seats.

Mr. Ebers came into the box to express his regrets; and he did all in his power to convince the ladies that it really was never meant that those who purchased tickets for the night should enter the private boxes of ladies who disposed of their tickets.

“And pray, sir,” said the eldest lady bridling, “do we look like people who would bemean ourselves by going into the pit?”

“Don’t let’s have no more to do,” said the powdered gentleman pompously. “Mr. Ebers! we request you to prevent this bold young man and woman from making a noise, as we comed here for to see the Opera, not to listen to all the absurd things you choose to tell us. When we want you we will call on you in your own shop!”

“Do sit down, Mr. Ebers,” said I, pointing to a chair, which he accepted for a few moments, merely to repeat his regrets that we had been so intruded upon.

“I was now determined to have these people out, *coute qu'il coute*.”

“Madam,” said I to the ugliest lady, “I take it for granted from your appearance, that you are a lady of strict virtue?”

The woman stared at me!

“Consequently,” I continued, “it must be painful for you to continue with a woman so notoriously wicked as I am, and in my private box too! just as if you were a particular friend of mine.”

“Now, Hopkins! what’s to be done?” said the two ladies at once.

“I am not joking,” continued I, “as you will soon ascertain beyond a doubt, since I expect the pork-merchant with whom I have promised to pass the night every instant.”

“All quite true, madam,” said Churchill, quietly, “and farther, I was her companion last night. It

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was her respect for you which has made her so very anxious to have you out before she sends for the bottle of brandy she usually takes here ; because she is the most violent creature in the world after she has got a little here,” pointing to his forehead.

“ Mr. Hopkins, come out ! ” said the ladies, and out they all bundled.

Churchill followed them some paces down the passage, on purpose to laugh at them, and returned handing in Julia and Fanny.

Fanny could not for the life of her help laughing, and yet she was so good, and loved me so dearly, she could not but feel hurt that I had given myself so bad a character.

“ Why make yourself out worse than you are ? ” she asked.

“ Never mind, dear Fan, plenty of people are left to make the best of themselves. One wants a little variety in life.”

“ Is that Berkeley Paget peeping out of Amy’s box ? Why he looks like a schoolmaster of Athens ! Oh how beautiful Lady Foley is ! As to those vacant Pagets one is tired of seeing them, they are so proud and stupid. Now I love pride ; but hate your Lady Jane Paget-stupidity.”

“ When do you mean to leave off talking nonsense ? ” said Fanny.

“ As soon as ever Lady Ann Wyndham will deign to lay aside her leopard-fur tippet, with gold tassels, thrown off her bosom to keep her cold, and her yellow blinds : but look at Her Royal Highness the —— of —— ; I thought it was a gold fish.”

“ Upon my honour she is an odd fish,” said Lord Glengal, who came in time enough to hear my last remark.

Next followed Luttrell, Nugent, Lord William Russell, Clanronald, Macdonald, Lord of the Isles, &c., and everybody inquired if I had received any news from the Peninsula, although everybody knew that it was as yet impossible ; but then people must

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say something, otherwise they appear so stupid, you know !

At this time, I remember there were at least four men who were, or professed to be, in love with me, and I have forgotten their names ; but I may recollect them for my next book.

It is very provoking ! One was a bishop's son, and he used to sigh by the hour together. Then there was a little quiz of a lord, or rather an earl, who had long been married to a high-bred foreigner. However that poor little creature is so afraid of his wife, that, if he will only behave decently, I do not mean to publish him. There was the Boring Don also, whom some call Lord Boringdon : but I defy my worst enemy to prove that I was ever false to Worcester while I pretended to good faith, since it is absolutely impossible.

I passed a merry night and, as Mr. Nugent was bringing me to a hackney coach, as carriage was out of the question on the Duke of Beaufort's princely allowance, I observed Mr. Meyler waiting as if on purpose to speak to me slyly, as I passed just by the Haymarket-entrance to the theatre.

And Harriette Wilson had refused to become Marchioness of Worcester, to be waited for in a corner by a vile sugar-baker ! Oh ye gods ! I wonder I did not drop down dead on the spot. But as Lord Byron says, "There is no spirit nowadays," so I merely flew into a passion !

Meyler's beautiful dimple as he smiled on me, did not disarm me in the least.

"Mr. Meyler," said I, *en passant*, "it is not necessary for you to conceal yourself in by-corners in order to acknowledge me, and for this very simple reason, I wish to be allowed to decline your acquaintance."

"But why ?" asked Meyler, following us up.

"Merely that I consider you a dead bore," I added, as I stepped into the hackney coach and was followed by Julia. Fanny had retired early with Colonel Parker.

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Nugent directed our coachman to Camden Town, and then wished us a good night : but we had scarcely got clear of the throng of carriages, when we observed a man in silk stockings running after us, bawling to the coachman to stop.

It was Mr. Meyler, who came up to the coach-window quite out of breath, to beg very earnestly and humbly, that we would permit him to enter the carriage just for a few moments, while he made his apologies and explained things.

"It is so perfectly unnecessary, Mr. Meyler, that I hope you will not detain us any longer."

"Mrs. Johnstone," said Meyler, addressing Julia beseechingly. "pray intercede for me. Do pray allow me to speak to you five minutes. You may put me down again at White's in St. James's Street, if you are tired of me."

"Oh ! there can be no harm since we are two," said Julia.

And, in spite of all I could say or do to prevent her, she pulled the check string, and Meyler seated himself by my side, declaring he was willing to prove at the very next Opera, how desirous and how proud he should feel to acknowledge and protect me there or anywhere else.

I told him I had merely spoken in haste, as the thing struck me at the moment ; that it was forgotten the next, and, if I had been rude, I was ready to apologise rather than be teased any longer on a subject which must be so uninteresting to all parties. Situated as I was with his friend Lord Worcester, and being about to retire into Devonshire till his lordship's return, what was the use of making acquaintances ?

"Oh dear," said Julia, "what shall I do ?"

"What has happened to you pray ?" I inquired.

"Oh, I am ruined—I shall be ruined ! The man will arrest me for his bill. I had all the trouble in the world to get two twenty pound notes out of Napier at the Opera to-night, for the purpose of settling his bill

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with them early in the morning, and they are gone!"

Poor Julia, as she turned over her reticule for the last time, appeared the image of despair. We had only just entered Pall Mall. Meyler, glad to be employed rather than be turned out altogether, entreated us to wait in the coach, while he ran back to search my box for Julia's bank-notes.

Julia, being more in debt than she dared to acquaint her stingy lover Napier with, and really dreading the bailiffs every hour of her life, was miserably agitated at this accident; and, being pregnant as usual, she was seized with violent sickness just as Meyler had left us.

"What will become of me?" said she. "I must drive off directly. I would rather go to prison than disgust that charming young man with my sickness."

I thought it cruel to keep her waiting since she was so very ill, and therefore, seeing the watchman standing in his box, I offered to let her set me down and drive off without me.

"How can you wait in this dress in the middle of the streets?" Julia asked.

I told her I would put my shawl over my head, and present the watchman with a shilling, desiring his protection for a few seconds, that I might not miss Mr. Meyler with the bank-notes.

Julia grew worse, and I made the coachman drive her home without me.

In about ten minutes Meyler came running towards the spot where I stood, and appeared to be looking eagerly about for our hackney-coach.

"Here, Mr. Meyler," said I, tapping him on the arm.

"No, no, not to-night," said Meyler, pushing me from him, without looking at me.

"It is Harriette," said I, and he turned round in much astonishment.

"You here alone?" said Meyler, "good heavens! I beg you ten thousand pardons."

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“Julia was seized with such a violent head-ache and sickness, that it was misery for her to remain an instant ; therefore I made her drive home without me.”

Meyler was evidently delighted to find me alone in the streets ; but, having discovered that nothing was to be done with me, without a little more ceremony than he at first considered would be necessary, he began by expressing his regrets that no money was to be found and, still more, he lamented having just lent his carriage to Lady Castlereagh.

“How could I be so stupid,” said he : “but you will allow me to set you down in a hackney-coach ?”

“Certainly not,” was my reply ; and, lest he should again run after me, I declared that, since the evening was so warm and moonlight, I proposed walking home, if he insisted on accompanying me, and we actually walked full dressed from Pall Mall to Camden Town ; during which said long walk Meyler endeavoured to make himself as amiable as possible, and took his leave at my door, without teasing me for anything except permission to call on me some morning.

He was so very pressing, that I was at last foolish enough to say he might pay me a visit at Julia’s on the following Thursday, and he left me quite satisfied and delighted, with having obtained so much more than he had expected from my manner of receiving his advances at the beginning of the evening.

I omitted to acquaint my readers that, just before the departure of Lord Worcester, Her Grace of Beaufort took it into her head to break the seals of my letters. It was very odd that so immaculate a lady could venture to cast her chaste eyes on the private letters of Harriette Wilson—the vile, profligate Harriette Wilson—addressed to her lover ! Moreover, it was surely dishonourable and dishonest : at least, it would have been called so if I had done it ; and then the duchess declared to her son that my last

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letter was such an indecent one she could not read it, and she proceeded to reason on the immorality of a paragraph at the very bottom of my paper; which proves true the old saying—liars must have good memories.

N'importe!

I called on Julia the next morning, to acquaint her that I had taken the liberty of inviting Meyler to her house, because I knew it would make Lord Worcester miserable if I were to receive him in my own.

"I like your making apologies," said Julia, "when you know how very much I admire the lovely creature Meyler. Apropos," continued Julia, "my two banknotes were in my bosom all the while, and I want very much to apologise to that dear, little, blooming, arch-looking man, for all the trouble I have given him."

I could not but fancy Julia was not so much my friend as she ought to have been, considering how anxious I had always shown myself for her welfare, in thus encouraging Meyler; and I went home more than usually interested about Lord Worcester; because Julia tried to make me neglect him.

In this humour, I sent off a few lines to Mr. Meyler, begging to be excused from my promise of meeting him at Mrs. Johnstone's. "All this is infinitely amiable of me," I reflected with much self-complacency, for I was very dull by myself, and Meyler, as to externals, was much to my taste.

Julia informed me in the evening that Meyler had sat with her for more than two hours, hoping to see me, and had gone away much disappointed.

The next day, I received a letter from him begging permission to call on me; and, as I sent no answer, he took the liberty of coming to my house without permission, and I had some difficulty, and so had my servant, in getting him out of it, and which was not till he had made every possible effort to see me, for he went upstairs and tried to open the door of my sitting-room, which I had locked.

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The moment he was fairly out of the house I addressed the following note to him.

“ Miss Wilson presents her compliments to Mr. Meyler, is under the necessity of informing him that she requires a little more respect than he seems disposed to show towards her. Mr. Meyler might have taken it for granted that, if she had been at home this morning and disposed to receive his visits, she should not have been denied to him.

“ CAMDEN TOWN.”

On Saturday, I could not well turn Meyler out of a box in which Julia had a share, without her consent, and I was teased and talked into allowing him to set us down ; but nothing could induce me to admit him into my house nor to remain alone with him an instant anywhere.

I had promised to send Worcester a journal of everything I did ; and it really is so little in my nature, that it is scarcely in my power to be artful ; and so, as I would not walk about Camden Town to enjoy a *tête-à-tête* by moonlight, Julia was pressed into the service, and we all three wandered about the fields, and Meyler sighed and talked downright sentimentally, about leading a chaste life for my sake and sending away all these women ! At this of course we both laughed ; but Meyler continued in the same humour for two months longer. I never received a single visit from him at my own house, and insisted over and over again that he should not be admitted into my Opera-box : but Meyler had so many little winning ways really they were overpowering to a poor weak woman ! He would tap at the door of my box, and Julia would open it, and assure him that I should quarrel with them both if she admitted him : and Meyler, instead of looking cross, would sigh, and point to a rose in his bosom, and desire Julia to tell me that it was the rose I gave him a week before, and he had preserved it with the greatest care.. Then he would go downstairs, and then his legs were so

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beautiful, and his skin so clear and transparent, and Meyler was sentimental for the first time in his life !

Really all these things and thirty thousand a year besides were enough to melt a heart of stone : and, as we were going out of the Opera, we were sure to see Meyler's bright smile as he stood watching for us. Then, if there was the least difficulty about coaches, &c., he would come up and say mildly, that his carriage was at the door and, if we would use it, he would not enter it but go home in a friend's. In short, Meyler was so very humble, persevering, and indefatigable, that he contrived to see and converse with me every day of my life in spite of all I could do to prevent him, although I never once admitted him to my house, or to a *tête-à-tête*, and I wrote Worcester a full and most exact account of all my proceedings. I even went so far as to tell him, I really was afraid Meyler's attention might create a very strong fancy, notwithstanding I certainly had not esteem for him. To prevent the possibility of this I proposed retiring into some quiet village in Devonshire.

This my readers, I mean my young and handsome readers, will admit was a sort of thing easier said than done. London was so very gay ! Meyler so very attentive ! *Tout le monde* seemed so very much to admire my person, and delight in my conversation ; and I was about to leave all this for a dull village, where I was to pass one of the most brilliant years of my life in perfect solitude.

"I will make any settlement on you you may please to ask of me," said Meyler, "if you will but leave Worcester and live with me."

"You have told me this at least fifty times already," I replied, "and you really may spare yourself any further useless trouble. I must follow the dictates of my heart whatever may become of me. There will be a consolation in a clear conscience, and, in leaving Worcester, I should feel that I deserved the worst that could happen to me, and both your lives might be lost in a duel : or, if Worcester was killed

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abroad, having first cursed me for my conduct, I should never get over it: else, you know I am full half in love with you, and Worcester knows well I was never one bit in love with him."

"Then if you do love me," said Meyler, "I will hold myself disengaged, and wait for my chance of you during the whole of that year you have promised to wait for Worcester's return."

I laughed at Meyler's promises, assuring him I had not the least faith in them.

Worcester was eternally writing to me, and nothing could be more romantically tender than his letters. No power on earth could tempt him, or should ever induce him, while he breathed, to even bestow a single kiss on any woman's lips but mine, &c.; then followed very excellent descriptions of battles, with a long account of Parker, for Fanny.

These very kind letters at length determined me to leave London.

The last evening I passed in town was truly a dull one to me. "No doubt," thought I, "this gay young volatile creature, surrounded as he is by temptation, will forget me in less than a month! I am unprovided for, and am leaving every friend on earth, to wander about for a lone lodging in a dismal village. It cannot be helped! Worcester's mind must be set at rest; because there was nothing he was not ready to do for me."

"Where is there a village?" said I to Luttrell, who informed me that there was a village called Charmouth, within thirty miles of Exeter, which, as he once passed through it, had struck him as particularly picturesque.

"That will do," said I, sick of the dry, dull subject; and I took a place for myself and my *femme de chambre* in the Exeter mail without further delay.

Meyler was half cooled, as soon as I was quite determined to leave London; but still he was very melancholy.

"Might he write to me?" he inquired.

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“Yes,” said I, “but your letters will be shown to Worcester, mind; so you must confine yourself to mere friendship. If, however, circumstances force me to leave his lordship and you are good enough to remember me with kindness, I will gladly come to you.”

“In a year, then,” said Meyler, “if Worcester does not return?”

“All that must depend on circumstances,” I replied.

Meyler shed one tear at parting—*c'était beaucoup pour lui*, and he gave me a gold toothpick case, with some of his hair in it; so, having taken leave of Fanny and Julia, fancy me and my maid in the Exeter mail on our road to Charmouth: and, in about one fortnight after my arrival in this village, my reader may imagine me sitting at a little, rural, thatched window, in that beautiful country, addressing the following long letter to my sister Fanny:

“Charmouth, Devonshire

“MY DEAREST SISTER,—I really am afraid you will accuse me of want of affection towards you, in having suffered a whole fortnight to elapse without acquainting you of my arrival in this part of the world. The fact is my constitution is really good for nothing, and I have only just recovered the fatigues of two successive nights passed in the mail-coach. I could have scribbled a few lines it is true; but then I thought it would be so cockney-like, to put you to the expense of heavy postage, merely to state our safe arrival; and I waited till I could give you some little account of myself.

“To begin then, we got here at about six in the evening, without anything in the least romantic having occurred to us; for we were neither upset nor thrown into a pond, just as a lovely youth happened to be passing by.

“One of these incidents ought really to have occurred; *mais enfin que voulez-vous?* It was a beautiful May evening when the mail-coach set us

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down at a little country-looking sort of pot-house in this village. I was wretchedly oppressed by melancholy and fatigue. I inquired for beds, and was informed by very good luck that my landlady's only bed-room, containing two small, neat, white beds, was at our disposal. The stair-case was a ladder, or rather a ladder was the stair-case. We will not be particular. I was soon in bed, and my maid contrived to procure me a cup of tea, which is all I remember happening to me till about eight the next morning, when the broad sun, shining in my face for want of window-curtains, induced me to rise. As for my maid, she was already dressed and busy with my trunks, searching out my clean linen. I am sorry, really, for the most noble the Marquis of Worcester, but the fact is, my very first thoughts on awaking, and my most sincere regrets, were for the miles which now separated me from poor, little, beautiful Meyler. In short, having done everything right towards Worcester, I loved him much less for that very reason. My maid, as you know, is really superior to the generality of *femmes de chambre*, and as I have had reason to believe is really attached to me: still, I fancy, she must have left somebody yet dearer to her in London, from her extreme melancholy. However, my own spirits were this morning so deeply oppressed, that I liked her the better for being of my humour.

" As soon as I was dressed, my good-natured landlady begged I would come down to breakfast, while it was hot. She gave us most excellent Devonshire cream and hot Devonshire cakes. In short, everything was so clean and delicious in its way, that it was difficult not to be hungry.

" After our breakfast we inquired for a guide, to show us some of the beauties of that part of the country.

" ' My little boy will take you over to Lyme Regis. He is particularly cute, and can tell you more than I can,' said the good landlady.

" ' What distance is Lyme Regis from this village ? ' I inquired.

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“‘Oh laws! only about two miles, and the most beautifullest walk in the world.’

“Behold us then, on our road to Lyme Regis, with a little cute Devonshire lad for our guide. I cannot describe the scenery like Mrs. Radcliffe, I wish I could; but alas! I have not an idea of the kind, and yet I can feel and enjoy it. Devonshire you know is a very hilly country, and the air is almost as pure as that in Italy. After following our guide for about a quarter of a mile, along a close, narrow lane, entirely shaded from the sun, we turned a sudden angle, when such a magnificent view of the ocean presented itself, as absolutely fixed us to the spot for nearly ten minutes. I wish I could describe it, for nothing in the shape of scenery ever made such an impression on me as that we enjoyed in our walk from the village of Charmouth to the pretty little watering-place called Lyme Regis. It was about twelve o'clock when we arrived there.

“Lyme Regis is a sort of Brighton in miniature, all bustle and confusion, assembly-rooms, donkey-riding, raffling, &c. &c. It was sixpence per night to attend the assemblies, and much cheaper if paid by the season. We went to a little inn and dined. From the window, I was much amused to see the number of smart old maids that were tripping down the streets, in turbans or artificial flowers twined around their wigs, on the light fantastic toe, to the sixpenny assembly-rooms at five in the evening! They were very pleasantly situated near the sea, and as we walked past their windows we saw them all drinking tea and playing cards. There were amongst them persons of the highest rank; but the society was chiefly composed of people of very small independent fortunes, who for economy had settled at Lyme Regis; or of such as required sea-bathing; natives, either of Exeter or any neighbouring town. There were plenty of furnished lodgings to be let at Lyme Regis; but I determined if possible to establish myself at Charmouth, that place being so much more to my taste.

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“‘It will be impossible, madam,’ said the landlady where we dined, ‘since Charmouth is a very genteel village, inhabited by persons of small fortunes, who would not condescend to let lodgings or take in boarders. There are not perhaps three dozen houses in the whole village, and certainly not one lodging-house. All are independent and proud, except the owners of a few huts round about that neighbourhood, to whom the gentry of Charmouth are very kind and charitable.’

“‘Well then, I must return, much against my will, to establish myself here,’ said I. This idea increased my melancholy, for I hate, and always did hate, anything like London in miniature. Give me town or country *en grand*! Solitude or the best society; but I abhor little sixpenny assembly-places.

“At eight o’clock in the evening we arrived at our humble inn at Charmouth in a donkey-cart, and immediately retired to rest. At six the next morning, since the broad daylight would not suffer me to sleep, I determined to walk all about the village in search of lodgings, before I could be induced to give up the hopes of securing a residence there. We found no difficulty in procuring the same excellent breakfast, which was served up with perfect neatness by half-past six, and at a little after seven the gay and fashionable Harriette Wilson was to be seen strolling about the little village of Charmouth as though it had been her native place, and she had never heard tell of the pomps and vanities of this very wicked world.

We carefully examined every house we passed for a bill indicative of lodgings to let; but in vain. They all appeared to be inhabited by some respectable individual, neither rich nor poor. We had walked twice through the village and round about it, and were bending our steps towards our little pot-house in mute despair, when my attention was arrested by the striking loveliness of a young lady who was watering some flowers at one of the windows of a house I had before admired for its peculiar neatness. She

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smiled so very graciously that I was encouraged in my wish to address her. The moment she saw me make towards the little street-door, she ran and opened it herself. After many apologies, I entreated to be informed if I was likely to succeed in obtaining board and lodging with any private family at Charmouth. The young lady entreated me to walk into the parlour and sit down. We chatted together for about a quarter of an hour, like people who had taken a liking to each other, and then she left me to speak to her mother on the subject of procuring me a comfortable residence. In a short time she returned, and presented me to two very respectable-looking women in deep mourning, as her mother and aunt. After a little more conversation, Mrs. Edmond, which was the name of the young lady's mother, spoke to me to this effect : 'I am the widow of an officer in the navy, whose death, when abroad, I learned ten years ago from a brother-officer who had been present, and came here to convey his last requests to his family ; since that moment, having for ever renounced the world, I live only in my child, and have nothing to do on earth but to attend to and promote her happiness. She feels greatly disposed to benefit by your pleasant society, and has made it her anxious request that I will offer you an asylum in my house : therefore, if you like to inhabit a snug room which faces the country, it is at your service, and you may keep it entirely for your own use. I have also a servant's room for your maid, and, if you can accustom yourself to our family dinner, the thing is arranged at once.'

"I could scarcely conceal my surprise at finding such good, innocent, confiding people, ready thus to take a stranger in without making a single inquiry. However, as I determined to act with the strictest propriety, and conform to the established rules of the family, to be regular at church too for the sake of example, I conceived that it was certainly not incumbent on me to turn king's evidence against myself as

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to my former irregularities, or, as my friend Miss Higgins would say, little peccadillos. I pressed them to name terms for me and my maid at once, and the price they asked for being troubled with us both was so ridiculously moderate that I insisted on doubling it, and refused to hear another word on the subject. These good people would not even allow me to return to the little inn, but despatched a man, with my *femme de chambre*, to pay my bill and bring my trunks to me.

“Everything, which the warmest affection or the oldest friendship could have dictated, was put in practice for our comfort and accommodation. I had a nice bedroom, adjoining the snug little sitting-room where I am now writing, and Mrs. Edmond, who has long studied the qualities of medicine, in order to render herself useful to the poor people about the village, insisted on doctoring me, declaring that I was feverish. One of the ladies rubbed my feet, another administered white wine-whey, and another—but I have swelled my letter to such an enormous length, that I must defer saying any more about these good people till my next. I am very anxious to hear from you, and I confess I should like to know if Meyler has entirely forgotten me.

“What vain creatures we are! I expected to have received at least half a dozen letters from that young gentleman ere this. Alas! not a single line! Do pray, dear Fanny, let me soon be consoled in this extreme case, by an account of his having hanged or shot himself! I must enclose this to the Marquis of Hertford, not to ruin you. Pray write soon to a poor melancholy recluse, and believe me ever,

“Your most affectionate sister,

“H. W.

“P.S.—How do Amy and her schoolmaster of Athens go on?”

CHAPTER XXIX

Two days after I had despatched the foregoing long letter to Fanny, the little post-woman—for we had no post-man; but a good old soul, who used to trot à l'Esterhazy—came down the hill with a lanthorn, the mail-bag coming into Charmouth at ten o'clock at night. Eliza Edmond and I had watched this poor creature every night during almost a fortnight, from my little window, as the light of her lamp appeared for an instant and was lost again, while she stopped to deliver her letters. At last, she stopped at our door, and presented two heavy packages for Mrs. Wilson.

The kind, warm-hearted Miss Edmond came flying upstairs, and was breathless when she delivered them.

“One of these is a foreign letter, and no doubt from your husband,” said Eliza, kissing my cheek, while her eyes sparkled with such unaffected, benevolent joy, as made her beauty appear more than human.

I hastily examined the address of the first which was presented to me: it was from Lord Worcester, and the real anxiety I felt to learn his safety, overcoming all curiosity about Meyler, I broke the seal of this, while the other unexamined had fallen to the ground.

“It is from your husband then?” asked Eliza, and, having answered her in the affirmative, she had the delicacy to glide out of the room like a spirit before I was aware of it.

Worcester had already been in one action. He

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had prayed to me, as to his tutelar saint, kissed my chain, which he wore about his neck, and his party had been successful. He wrote in high spirits, and gave me what, by excellent judges of those matters, was afterwards considered one of the most accurate descriptions of a battle ever written by any officer. The letter ended, like all the rest of his letters, with vows of eternal love and fidelity ; and he assured me that he had already learned to speak Spanish.

What a clever man this might have been, had he but the habit of reflection, methought ; for Lord Worcester's memory often astonished me ; and yet the man must after all be little better than an idiot, if he cannot reflect, or study, or understand the secret workings of the human mind. Such men esteem no act but that of hand :

The still and mental parts,
That do contrive how many hands shall strike,
When fitness calls them on ; and know, by measure
Of their observant toil, the enemies' weight—
Why this hath not a finger's dignity ;
They call this bed-work, moppery, closet-work ;
So that the ram, that batters down the wall,
For the great swing, and rudeness of his poise,
They place before the hand that made the engine,
Or those, that, with the fineness of their souls,
By reason, guide his execution.

I have been led into making this quotation, *malgré moi* ; it is so very striking, clear, and beautifully expressive.

Somebody or other has, I think, asserted that the comedy of *Troilus and Cressida* is not a genuine work of Shakespeare ; but I cannot but agree with a very great man, Doctor Johnson, that it is easier to imagine Shakespeare might sometimes fall below his highest flights ; than that anybody else should be found equal to his lowest.

Having finished reading Lord Worcester's letter I hastened to examine the second epistle, which had

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fallen to the ground. It was as I suspected, or rather as I hoped, from Meyler. He had at first, he said, determined to forget me, since there was so very little chance of our ever meeting again. However that, as he was pleased to add, was out of the question. He was in fact unwell, and required Devonshire air. I must not be surprised therefore to see him in my neighbourhood. He had only once called on Julia since I left town; because seeing my friends only added to his melancholy now I was gone. There was nothing like Worcester's sort of rapture in his letter, yet something melancholy and interesting about his style of writing which appeared perfectly unaffected.

Meyler was anything rather than romantic: his manner and voice were particularly pleasing at all times; but the former had generally something of melancholy, till he had drunk a few bottles of claret, and then, though not at all noisy or ungentlemanlike, he appeared all animation and happiness.

I was a good deal affected by his letter, and the idea that I had no chance of seeing him again; nevertheless I immediately answered his letter as follows:

“CHARMOUTH

“MY DEAR MR. MEYLER,—I must candidly confess that I am glad that you have not forgotten me: and I wish you happy with all my heart and soul; but, believe me, I cannot prove myself more desirous of being liked and esteemed by you, than I have done and shall continue to do. I have often been surprised at the imbecility of the silly, weak, mistaken females, who fancy they can make themselves beloved by breaking the solemn vows they have made to God and their husbands, and forsaking for ever a whole family of helpless children; as if a man could esteem trust, love, or honour one, who proves herself a heartless hypocrite and an unnatural mother! One who, for the indulgence of mere animal passion (for of real affection she must be incapable), can forsake her children and forget the laws of God and man. I have

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never been married it is true. My mother's marriage was unhappy, and besides being somewhat disgusted with what I saw of it, I cannot for the life of me divest myself of the idea that, if all were alike honourable and true, as I wish to be, it would be unnecessary to bind men and women together by law, since two persons who may have chosen each other from affection, possessing heart and honour, could not part, and, where there is neither the one nor the other even marriage does not bind. My idea may be wicked or erroneous: indeed I think it is so, with regard to mothers: but, at least, I hope I am incapable of acting towards any one with a want of honour, or of such tenderness of heart, towards those who deserve it from me, without which feeling a woman is in my opinion unsexed. As I keep my faith to Worcester, so hereafter will you be inclined to trust me, if any unexpected circumstance should oblige me to separate from him. In the meantime, I must throw myself on your honour and kindness, as to your idea of intruding your society on me in Devonshire. I assure you that, on the very day of your arrival, I shall hold myself in readiness to leave these very hospitable, new friends, who have been so very kind to me; but you are of course only joking! How, in fact, can I be so ridiculous as to fancy for an instant the rich, handsome, gay Meyler, would so far astonish the natives of this little village as to come and establish himself among us? How you would laugh to see me in my quiet straw bonnet, trotting down the hill to church, and lending my arm to the curate's father, aged ninety-five! After church, I appear in the character of My Lady Bountiful, paying visits to the sick, followed by my maid, bearing my good host's medicine, with my own wine and broth. Charity is stimulated here, where the number of poor is so limited that, by each of us contributing our mite, we may hope to meet only smiling, happy faces in our walks.

"Last week I found a poor woman, and six fine beautiful children without a roof to her house: for a

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trifle I made it a comparative paradise, and now Miss Edmond and her mother are employed in making up the stuff-frocks I purchased for the children. But enough of Harriette Wilson as Lady Bountiful.

“ I suppose you will soon get into parliament, à présent, que vous avez vingt et un ans bien sommes. Do you see much of your favourite, the Duchess of Beaufort now ? Pray tell me all the news you can scrape together. Of course the Beauforts have received news from Lord Worcester long ago ? My last letter from his lordship, which I received with yours, had been delayed by being directed to London. My old beau, Wellington, is going on famously, thanks to the fineness of his nerves and his want of feeling, and his excellent luck. I do not mean to say he has not a good notion of commanding an army ; for, though I do not understand things, I am willing to take it for granted that this is the case ; and yet, I am told, but I will not venture to say by whom, that he is miserably ignorant of the country, and ought really to hire a master for geography, instead of sitting still and looking so stupid after dinner. It is really quite disgusting, when one has been hearing him so cried up, to see him such a savage ! Nevertheless, tel qu'il est, he has made, I understand, a desperate conquest of Lady Caroline Lamb ; but then her ladyship was never very particular you know.

“ I will now take my leave, with sincerest wishes for your welfare and happiness ; therefore, whether we meet again or not,

“ God bless you.

“ H. W.”

Though I remained a year at Charmouth, I really can remember no one incident that occurred to me during the whole of my *séjour* there, worthy the attention of my readers. Mrs. Edmond was invariably obliging, gentle and melancholy, her sister, “ my aunt Martha,” as Eliza Edmond used to call her, was a very merry, comical old maid. Eliza was, with-

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out any one exception but that of my beloved mother, the most truly virtuous being, according to my acceptance of the word virtuous, which does not mean chastity only, I ever met with in my whole life. Nay, my dear mother herself cannot have been purer in her thoughts, hopes and wishes, than was the beautiful Eliza Edmond ; but then Eliza possessed a less enlarged mind, and was more a bigot, and had less quickness, and natural strong sense, than that dear parent. Eliza lived and breathed but to serve, oblige and benefit others, and yet she was afraid of God our Father who is in heaven. This I could never understand.

My mother would have lived for others, whether it pleased God or not ; because her heart would have it so ; but, when she felt her death approaching, instead of praying or sending for a priest, she merely said, “ I wanted rest, and God is about to reward me with it : yet I fain would have remained with my children had it so pleased him ; for I asked not to be happy before they were.”

Eliza was beautiful ; but my mother’s beauty was that of spirit and mind alone. It was not earthly ; for I have seen nothing on earth like it : so pale, so still, and so expressive. In the whole course of my life, I never saw my mother anxious, even one instant, unless for others ; and yet I have nursed her in the bitter pangs of child-bearing, and have often seen her tortured with bodily pain ; yet, God’s will be done, was all she said or thought as to herself, while, in regard to serving others she was the most sanguine, eager and romantic that could be possibly imagined.

Eliza was too religious, too devoted to the observance of every form of the Christian faith, to have cast an eye of love on anything but a parson ; and her heart would therefore have been safe, but that, unluckily, a certain black-eyed, most libidinous divine, having been thrown into her society just before I became acquainted with her, his hypocrisy had proved more than a match for poor Eliza’s simplicity ; and

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she had loved him, from the belief that he was most pure and holy. My readers may conceive what her feelings must have been, when this first object of her warmest, devoted love, finally declared to her that their marriage must be kept secret, since his friends would never receive her as their daughter.

From that hour Eliza had never seen her lover, and no power on earth could have induced her to consent to a single interview.

" You are then, very proud, Eliza," said I, to her, after her mother had related this story to me in her presence.

" Do you call my love of God pride ? " asked Eliza. " If ever I had married, my husband, after my God, would have been nearest my heart. Could I respect the husband who would deceive his parents ? or would you have had me force myself into a family which despised me ? "

I never saw Eliza so agitated, and, observing the crimson blush on her cheek, I said, " You are very proud, Eliza, after all, that is the truth."

Eliza's quivering lip was now pale as death, as she raised her eyes to heaven, and in the next instant she rushed out of the room.

Eliza's mother placed her hand gently on my shoulder, seeing that I was about to follow her daughter.

" Eliza is gone to pray," said Mrs. Edmond mildly. " You have frightened her ; but it was not, I am sure, intentionally. You know not how very delicate is her conscience ; how pure, yet how ardent are her feelings ! Pray go to her, in about a quarter of an hour. I would not have her dwell longer on what you have said ; for Eliza is consumptive. She will be taken from me soon enough, by God's will ; we must not cause her unnecessary agitation."

Mrs. Edmond, as she wiped away the tear which gave brilliancy to her eye, seemed as if she would have spoken severely to me, had severity been in her nature ! I held out my hand timidly towards her, and she

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immediately pressed it most cordially, as she repeated, smiling through her tears, "Eliza loves you so dearly, that I am sure, if you have wounded or frightened her you can and you will console her."

I pressed this tender mother's hand to my lips and hastened to join her no less tender daughter. I found her upon her knees and her eyes were bathed in tears.

"Eliza," said I, "why do you weep? Surely since God is our father, and you love Him, and pass every hour of your life in trying to please Him, you, of all people on earth, need not fear your father."

"But I am proud, very proud," said the poor, dear girl, sobbing, and throwing her arms round my neck, "and the indignation I expressed, and which I then believed to have been virtuous, you have taught me to believe was all pride; and that God, whom I adore, that God, in whose presence I shall soon stand, loves only the humble and the meek.

"Leave me," continued Eliza, in much agitation, "pray let me benefit by your good, your excellent understanding. I want to be reconciled to my God. Indeed you shall, if it so pleases Him, see me as calm and happy as ever when we meet at supper. Till then God bless you," and she imprinted a most fervent and most affectionate kiss on my cheek.

"God will not, I am sure, judge you so severely as you judge yourself, poor Eliza," I replied, and then left her.

Eliza, generally speaking, was more cheerful than persons usually are when they are dying; and nobody expected that poor Eliza would live beyond five and twenty.

We were often invited to little family tea-parties, where we passed our time comfortably enough, though most gay London ladies would have been bored to death; but I thank my God for bestowing on me a contented disposition.

Meyler wrote to me constantly: sometimes he was melancholy; then he determined to join me whether

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I would or not ; he next declared that I was cold and selfish, and that he would forget me : at last, he almost teased me out of a promise, or rather a half-promise that, if at the end of the year there were new obstacles thrown in the way of my joining Worcester, or his lordship's returning to me, I would put myself at once under Meyler's protection.

In the meantime Lord Worcester corresponded with me as regularly and lovingly as I could possibly desire, and so did Fanny. In answer to one of my letters to her, written nearly three months after my arrival in Devonshire, I received the following :

“ MY DEAR HARRIETTE,—Many thanks for your last kind letter, in which you enclose my Lord Worcester's, containing so much news of Colonel Parker. I was indeed in want of consolation ; for I am very melancholy, and my cough is still rather troublesome, although not bad enough to have prevented my attendance at the Opera, which closed but last night for the season.

“ All the gay world are constantly asking me about you. As to Mr. Meyler, we have seen but little of him. Last night however we observed him in the pit ; and so did Amy, who was of our party : she immediately sent somebody down to request him to join us, and her messenger returned, bringing Meyler with him. He looks very well, and, as usual, particularly interesting. He asked Julia and me at least a thousand questions about you. Amy, to change the disagreeable subject, invited him to sup with her ; but he begged to be excused, provokingly adding, that her house would make him melancholy, by reminding him of you. Amy could scarcely conceal her ill-humour at this answer. Julia asked him if he really meant to say he had not forgotten you all this time ? and he seriously declared that he had never loved you better nor any being else half so well : and then the poor little man sighed quite naturally, as though he could not help it ; but, though I do not mean to hurt your

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vanity, I fancy there was something of ill-health in that sigh of his. However, perhaps this is a mere fancy of mine, for Mr. Meyler himself, who ought to be the best judge, professes to be in remarkably good health, and he is known to ride very hard in Leicestershire. But there is something so remarkably transparent about Meyler's skin. It is, in fact, a churchyard-skin, like my own I think. I hope I am mistaken too : for it would be hard to die, in the bloom of youth and beauty, beloved by everybody, and with thirty thousand a year.

" My children, thank God, are all well, although I really feared my dear Louisa would have died last week, owing to my extreme folly in having suffered myself to be persuaded into administering one of Inglish's Scot's pills to the poor baby, out of sister Paragon's box. All Pandora's box of evils could scarcely have done more mischief. The child was absolutely convulsed with pain, while provoking sister Paragon looked on, calmly declaring that it was the first duty of an aperient, to gripe the patient as much as possible.

" Pray write a very long letter soon, and believe me, at all times, your most affectionate sister,

" FANNY PARKER."

CHAPTER XXX

HIS Grace of Beaufort had passed his word, as to the regular quarterly payment of an allowance which Worcester stipulated should be paid me if he left England ; yet four months had now elapsed without my having been able to obtain a single shilling from the duke, or even an answer to my letters, in which I assured him that all my ready money was gone and that I was entirely destitute of the means of existence.

The duke perhaps hoped to starve me into putting up with the first man I could find ; at all events, it was clear I might have starved, or begged, or thrown myself into the streets, before he would have offered me the least assistance while he could possibly have avoided it ; and, in this amiable conduct, I take it for granted he was upheld and encouraged by his most interesting duchess.

I was now in debt a whole quarter for board and lodging. Never having once doubted the duke's word of honour, conveyed to me by his man of business in the presence of his son ; and, being so far from London, I sat down to consider whom I could possibly consult in that part of the world, as to what was to become of me.

The only person in my neighbourhood, whose face I had ever seen before, was an old, cracked sort of a general, his name I have forgotten. I never had but a mere bowing acquaintance with him, from the circumstance of his being my next door neighbour in London, where he bore the character of a terrible

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deceiver of maids and maid-servants ! In short, I do not believe there was a single girl of that description within two miles of us, with whom he had not scraped a kind of acquaintance.

I remember a worthy clergyman who was also my near neighbour, took this gay Lothario's meddling with his maid very much amiss, and consequently addressed to him the following note, which he afterwards insisted on my reading one day when I met him in the Regent's Park, and had been myself reproaching him with his evil ways.

“ SIR,—I presume that you cannot wish to interfere with the domestic comforts of your neighbours. I have to request therefore that you never again to the latest hour of your life, carry your libertinism to such an extent as to meddle with my maid-servant.

“ I remain, Sir,

“ Your most obedient servant.”

The old general's answer was expressed in these words.

“ SIR,—Respect for your cloth will prevent my having the pleasure of blowing out your brains for your impertinence.

“ In answer to your letter, then, I have to inform you, that I neither want your man-servant, your maid-servant, your ox, your ass, nor anything that is yours, and remain,

“ Your most obedient servant.”

“ What do you think of this, Samuel ? ” said the worthy divine to his tall unlicked cub of a son, in cotton stockings and thick shoes, handing him the above epistle, after he had perused it three times over in silent astonishment.

“ Think of it ! ” said the son, as soon as he had looked it over, “ think of it, sir ? ”

“ Aye ! What may be your serious thoughts of it ? ” continued the parson.

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"Why, sir,—Why, sir," swelling with rage, "why—sir—d— his impudence!"

"For shame, Samuel, don't swear."

"Swear, sir? Don't tell me! this ought to make a parson swear."

Samuel snatched up his hat and ran out of the house.

In about two hours afterwards, as the old, impudent, Irish, cracked general was finishing his dinner at his own lodgings, in strutted Mr. Samuel, foaming with rage.

"Your most obedient," said the general.

"Sir," answered Samuel, "I am no parson, therefore no ceremony with me if you please. I want you to meet me to-morrow morning in Hyde Park at six; and, do you hear? Bring your second with you; there's my card."

"Just as you please, Mr. Mr.," and then the comical general read the card aloud, "Mr. Samuel Michael—just exactly as you please. Won't you take a glass of wine?" continued the general, looking at him for an instant, as he filled his own glass.

"No sir," said Samuel Michael, fiercely, "all I require of you, sir, is punctuality to-morrow morning."

"Just as you please," reiterated the general; and Samuel took his leave.

The next morning, the general ordered his old servant to bring him his coffee at five o'clock, and, as he was drinking it, with his papers before him, Samuel Michael again made his appearance.

"You will be surprised to see me here, general?" said Samuel, in a mild and tremulous tone. The general bowed—"but," continued Samuel, "but—it really is not worth while, I mean I think it is not necessary, to fight. In short, sir, if you require an apology, I am ready to write one down, if, general, you"—and he paused half breathless with fear.

"Just as you please, Mr. Samuel Michael—just exactly as you please," said the general again, as he turned over a parcel of receipts.

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"I may now, then," said Samuel, "conclude this unpleasant business is amicably settled?"

"Just exactly as you please, sir," answered the general once more, as he made some memoranda on the back of his receipt book.

So much for the old general! And more than he is worth.

When I saw him first at Charmouth, I cut him dead; but, being now really anxious to consult some one who knew a little about me, I took the liberty of nodding to him the next time I met him.

"Oh, oh, my fair neighbour! I really feared I had been so unfortunate as to have offended you. How do you do, pray?"

We then entered into conversation, and as I discovered that he, like half the rest of the world, had heard all about Worcester and me, I consulted him as to what was to be done.

"Don't you know Fisher, the lady-killer of these parts?" he inquired.

"Heaven forbid!" said I.

"Why so?" asked the general. "He is a most particularly sharp fellow, and, being a lawyer who knows who you are and all about you, he is the very man to consult."

"But then, I am so afraid of the persons with whom I am living," said I.

"Be assured," answered the general, "that Fisher will be secret as to your business. I will tell him you mean to apply to him, and you may depend upon his honour. I am sure he will put you up to a plan of making that vile, shabby, selfish Duke of Beaufort treat you better."

"But why is he called a lady-killer?"

"He is the beauty of Devonshire. Such black eyes! And six foot high!" answered the general.

"The very things I hate in a man, so I am safe, and may consult your Mr. Fisher, and yet hope to die a natural death after all."

I took my leave of this comical old man, and, on

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the very same evening, addressed the following note to the gay Mr. Fisher of Lyme Regis.

SIR,—A friend of yours has, I trust, acquainted you with my motive for wishing to see you. As the family with which I am staying is unacquainted with my real situation, I should wish to consult you without their knowledge, if you will be kind enough to say how that can be managed. If you will tell me the proper hour in the morning, I will go to Lyme Regis.

“ I remain, Sir,

“ Your most obedient, humble servant,
“ H. WILSON.”

“ What sort of a man is Mr. Fisher, the attorney of Lyme Regis ? ” said I to Eliza, after I had carried my letter to the post office.

“ Oh, he is a very gay man indeed ; a very shocking man, they say : indeed I have heard that he makes love to several women at the same time, although he is a married man ; but it would be uncharitable of us to suppose any man so wicked as that.”

I could not help laughing at poor Eliza, who must have been meant for the golden age.

The next evening, the little, old post-woman, for whom Eliza and I had been watching till we were nearly worn out, condescended to bend her steps, little lanthorn and all, towards our door. Down flew Eliza, and, this time, presented me with three letters ; the post-mark on one of them was Lyme Regis ; so, guessing this to be from Eliza’s terrible man, Mr. Fisher, I put it into my reticule unopened. The other two were from Meyler and Worcester. I beg his lordship’s pardon for putting him last, it was not certainly done with any intention to offend, but quite naturally. Meyler, having tried every other argument to induce me to leave Charmouth and Lord Worcester, now ventured on a threat !

“ You have a husband, with whom you are, it

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seems, quite satisfied ; or rather a lover for whom, though you profess not to be in love, you have made every sacrifice, and for whom, too, you cheerfully resign me and the income I have offered you, to assist those methodistical Edmonds in feeding their pigs and chickens ! *Grand bien vous fasse !* I, too, shall take unto myself a wife, as the Quaker says, and verily the spirit has moved me towards a certain fair one, and in sundry places.”

The letter finished with some Melton news, and an account of his having hurt his right arm, which would prevent his playing at tennis for the rest of his life. He would rather have lost half his estate, upon his honour. He was at last chosen for Winchester, after a severe contested election, which had cost him twenty thousand pounds ; but then it was well worth that sum to be independent. Not that he should be very active either way. In fact, Lord Bath had been kind enough to point out to him the best seat in the lower house for taking a nap. Still he should be miserable, if under the necessity of voting against his own idea of what was fitting and best. The letter went on in these words :

“ I had no idea, my dearest Harriette, for you are still very dear to me, although you do use me so ill, I had not the smallest idea that it was necessary to kiss so many dirty, ugly women, and drink so much ale, rum and milk, grog, raisin and elder wine, with porter and cyder, all in one day, otherwise I don’t think I would have gone into Parliament ; for I have been sick for a fortnight, and then, in this wretched state of stomach, one must get up, and make a speech to one’s constituents, full of lies about future protection, friendship, and God knows what. However, I was really getting on famously, as I flattered myself, and should have finished with éclat, had not my eyes encountered that fool, Lord Apsley, holding his sides in a roar of laughter, and he was joined by that prince of block-

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heads, Harry Mildmay, who is also Member for Winchester.

"I stopped short, of course, finding it impossible to go on. I was very drunk to be sure; but still, these fellows had no right to turn against me in such a mob. As to that ape, Mildmay, I am half determined to lead a virtuous life on my Hampshire estate, studying the happiness of my Winchester constituents, on purpose to mortify him, and cut him out there."

The letter ended with many tender professions and entreaties that I would go to him.

Worcester's letter, of three sheets crossed and re-crossed, only contained matter for four pages, leaving out the dearest darlings! angel-wives! loveliest, sweetest, adorable, own own, everlastingly to be worshipped! &c.

"We are," says Worcester's letter, only my readers must hold in mind that I am leaving out his lordship's ohs and ahs! "we are within a stone's throw of the enemy. God only knows whether I shall be permitted to see you again or not. Your chain is round my neck, and, as for your picture, I could not press my lips near enough to your sweet delicious eyes, without taking off the glass; and now, alas! I have kissed the left eye out, altogether, with your under lip. I am dreadfully melancholy, but, being so close to the enemy, pray don't tell anybody. If ever your heart beats against my own, and I leave you again, may I—"

But oaths are all nonsense, particularly those of noble lords, marquises, and dukes; besides, if I were to go on with the most noble the Marquis of Worcester's letter, I might tumble upon something indecent. Who knows; we are but mortal, even marquises and dukes are but mortal. And the weather is so hot in Spain and Portugal!

Poor Worcester! Or as your late frail wife used to call you, poor Worcey! Thou hast turned out a most cold-blooded profligate, as I am told: but it might not have been thus if we had married. Our tempers

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certainly did exactly suit each other ; and the love must ever predominate on one side, or there will be an end of all stimulus. Two people calling each other darlings, angels, and ducks cannot last. I liked you for your own happiness, and God knows, I was most true from the hour I placed myself under your protection up to the time we parted. Who dares say nay, I say he lieth. Let him prove it, if he can ; for my part, I defy him !

Poor Worcey ! You ought to have seen me provided for, and yet I can never quite forget how dearly you loved me, when you gave up all society, endured almost a parent's curse ; nay, more, gave up hunting and offered to support me by driving a mail coach !

No, young man : never mind what I sometimes write and say. Upon my honour ; upon my soul, to give you expressions out of Lord Ponsonby's last letter, I do not, and never shall quite forget you.

The third letter was, as I supposed, from the provincial Adonis, Mr. Fisher ; as follows :

“ **MADAM,**—Since secrecy is an object with you, I request you will come to my chambers just after it is dark on Thursday next, that being the only hour I can command as free from the interruption of clients ; it being my constant habit to refuse admittance to strangers after day-light, although I do not leave my chambers till my papers are all arranged for my clerks, who attend here before eight in the morning.

“ Obediently yours,

“ **CHARLES FREDERICK FISHER.**”

“ What a wretch ! ” said I to myself, as soon as I had read Mr. Fisher's eloquent epistle. “ I meet this dirty Devonshire lawyer after dark indeed ! I wish Worcester was here. If he had really loved me as he affects to do, he would have died rather than have left me to be thus insulted by this black, dirty, nasty, six-foot high country attorney ! Meet him at dark ! What could one do with such a wretch, either by day

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or night, or any kind of light. The monster! To flatter himself for an instant."

I hastily opened my writing desk, and addressed the following letter to Beau Fisher :

"SIR,—Whether I am, or am not, Lord Worcester's wife, be assured that he has too much respect for me to permit a country attorney to insult me by his invitations to meet him in the dark. You may, of course, do as you please, with regard to the secrecy I mentioned; but it is my and Lord Worcester's pleasure, that you never presume to insult me again with your odious and very humiliating proposals.

"I remain your most obedient,
"HARRIETTE."

After I had put this letter in the post-office the next morning, I strolled down the sea coast, and again met the old general. He came skipping towards me in great glee.

"You are the very person I wanted to see," said he, "I saw Fisher last night, and he told me he had just answered your note to assure you, that he should feel happy in being able to render you the slightest service."

"Pray don't mention Mr. Fisher to me," answered I, with much dignity.

"Why not?" inquired the general in surprise.

"Why, he has written me the most insulting letter possible. He desires me to go to his chambers at dark."

"Impossible," said the general.

"How do you mean impossible," I asked?

"Do you really mean to say that Fisher ever hinted anything like a wish to be favoured by you?"

"How do you mean favoured?"

"May I speak plainly?"

"I beg you will, general," answered I, impatiently.

"Do you really believe Fisher wanted to intrigue with you?"

"You may well be surprised at the wretch's presumption," said I.

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"No," interrupted the general, "Fisher would never surprise me by his presumption. I know him too well for that: but since you permit me to be frank, I will tell you what Fisher said of you the other day."

"Go on."

"You promise not to be offended?"

"I never was offended in the whole course of my life with persons for whom I have no regard, although one sometimes might seem indignant when vulgar people presume to be too impertinent."

The general commenced: "Says Fisher to me the other day, just as you were passing by, 'what in the name of the devil can Lord Worcester see to admire in that ugly piece of goods? She has not a good point about her.'"

"How very funny it will be, if I have mistaken his intentions," said I, and I burst into a loud laugh. The idea struck me as so perfectly absurd and comical!

"Rely upon it you have," said the general, "for, without flattery, I will take upon me to say upon my word and honour, Fisher thinks you anything but desirable, even supposing he had not more on his hands than he can possibly accomplish with any degree of credit to himself."

I had not been so amused since I left London; and I could not sleep all night for thinking of my mistake. Worcester had for the last three years so surfeited me with love and adoration, that, really, a little indifference was quite refreshing! I was half in love with the good attorney, and went to sleep at last, while wondering to myself what he was like.

At ten in the morning, I opened my eyes, and saw Eliza's pretty, smiling face, at my bed-side, with a letter in her hand.

"A man-servant has just brought this letter from Lyme Regis, and waits to know if you have any answer to send back," said Eliza.

I was seized with such a violent fit of laughter after the perusal of Mr. Fisher's letter, that poor Eliza really thought I was mad. It was as follows:

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“ MADAM,—Your misinterpretation of my last note is indeed truly astonishing! I can only assure you, madam, upon my honour, that I have not and I never had the slightest wish or intention to meet you but as a man of business.

“ Your very obedient, humble servant,
“ C. F. FISHER.”

“ What can you be laughing at so violently ? ” Eliza inquired.

“ Oh, you must excuse me,” answered I, still laughing.

“ Any answer for the servant ? ”

“ Oh, yes. Pray ask him to wait a few minutes,” said I, addressing myself to my maid; and I then hastily wrote the following answer to Mr. Fisher’s tender effusion :

“ SIR,—By your letter I have to apprehend that there was no real cause of alarm ! I cannot express my dismay, but must console myself with the hope and in the belief that you are all a century behind hand, as to good taste, in this part of the world.

“ I beg to remain, sir,
“ Your most obliged, and very
devoted, humble servant,
“ HARRIETTE.”

Having despatched the above, I wrote thus in answer to Meyler’s long letter :

“ DEAR MR. MEYLER,—During more than three weeks, I had not the honour of receiving a single line from you. At last you wrote and franked your letter, probably to show me that you were in Parliament! *Mais, Dieu me pardonne ! je crois que tu me menace ! croyez moi, mon ami, ni homme, ni femme, ni enfant, n’ont jamais rien eu de moi par ce moyen là.*

“ If you have found a woman to your taste, in God’s name marry her. I foster none but willing slaves believe me, and love none but such as cannot help themselves, but needs must love me. Your friends,

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the Beauforts, are treating me very ill, and I am afraid my good conduct and the strong desire I felt to act generously towards that family have been entirely lost upon them. However, I would rather be a dupe occasionally, than suspect all the world of selfishness and dishonour ; for then my life would be a burden to me ; so, come what may, I acted for the best, and according to the dictates of my conscience, therefore can never be completely wretched. God bless you, little Meyler. After all, I should not like you to forget me neither ; but you must do as you please you know.

“ H. W.”

As I took the thing so good-naturedly, I fancy Mr. Fisher felt a little ashamed of his late want of gallantry, for he wrote me another letter, in which he tried hard to soften down the cruelty of his first, styling himself the fox and the grapes, etc. However it would not do, and, when I passed him coming out of church, I shook my head at him so slyly, that the man was dying to laugh out, yet honourable enough to subdue his inclination, knowing I did not wish to be acknowledged by him.

I waited another month, in the vain expectation of receiving the promised allowance from the Duke of Beaufort, and then I wrote to him as follows :

“ Lord Worcester agreed to go abroad on condition that I was taken care of, and I promised to remain in England for one year during which time you pledged yourself to send me a quarterly allowance, or rather your man of business pledged himself in your name in the presence of your son.

“ I conceive a conditional engagement to be null and void, when the conditions are not fulfilled. I therefore propose immediately joining Lord Worcester in Spain, in case I do not receive a due remittance from your Grace by return of post. I cannot help

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adding that I should be very sorry to act with such want of feeling towards my greatest enemy, as you have invariably shown towards me, who have from first to last made every sacrifice in my power for your peace and happiness.

“I remain,

“your Grace’s most obedient
humble servant,

“H. WILSON.”

By return of post I received a very polite answer from the Duke of Beaufort, enclosing me a quarter’s allowance, with some very plausible excuse: I really forget what it was; but I think he said the delay was not his fault but Mr. Robinson’s. Mere nonsense, of course; since my frequent applications could not have miscarried, and His Grace never once condescended to write till I threatened to join Worcester, after which he was afraid to lose a single post.

I am now growing tired of Devonshire, and so I hope and trust are my readers. I propose giving them very little more news from that quarter. I remained there exactly twelve months, during which time the only two persons I beheld who had been before known to me were Lord Burghersh, whose estates are I believe in that part of the world, and who opened his eyes wide with astonishment at meeting me, and the old general there.

My dear mother and sister Fanny regularly corresponded with me, and Meyler was more sanguine than usual, as the year got to a close. He declared that he had no sort of fancy for anybody on earth but me, nor ever had since the very beginning of our acquaintance. Worcester also wrote in high spirits; stating that nothing should detain him in Spain an hour after the expiration of twelve months.

At last, oh killing news! Just as I was in the expectation of Worcester to fly away with me from Charmouth, which was all in his road from Spain, came a letter—it ought to have been sealed with black

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wax—to say that the Prince Regent, rather than Worcester should return to love and me, was about to oblige the Duke of Beaufort, while he gave the brave and dandy warriors of the Tenth an opportunity of distinguishing themselves. To be brief, Worcester's regiment was ordered abroad. Could he possibly, he wrote, come home at such a moment! But then his own darling angel, sweet Harriette would come to him! Of this he felt sure, &c.

"My dear Eliza, I must go to Spain," said I, as soon as I had finished this letter.

The whole house was in tears. "How very kind, yet how unaccountable, that strangers should feel so much more for us than our own sisters," thought I.

Eliza's aunt Martha declared that she would accompany me to Falmouth and see me sail. "I am old enough, and thank God I am no beauty," said aunt Martha, "and I may do what I please with my own little fortune. I have never yet been ten miles from my native place, and I want to see the world."

Fresh floods of tears were now forced out for my aunt Martha; however go she would.

"The worst of it is," continued aunt Martha, "that my habit is five and twenty years old, and as to travelling without a habit that is quite impossible."

"I think between us all three we can alter it into something smart and fashionable," said Eliza, and the next hour saw them occupied in unpicking, cutting, and basting at my aunt Martha's most ample calico habit.

I proposed setting off in two days. Much as I dreaded the sea, and hated the idea of Spain and war, still, anything was better than thus wasting one's sweetness on the desert air: besides, I was under a sort of engagement to join Worcester, if Worcester found it impossible to return to me. "Poor Meyler," thought I, and I will tell my readers a secret, I would much rather have gone to London.

I took an affectionate leave of my mother and sister in two very long letters; but I did not write to Meyler, I wanted him to remain in doubt as to my having

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left Charmouth, that he might remember me the longer.

My aunt Martha's habit was completely modernised in due time, and Mrs. Edmond and her amiable daughter passed the whole of the last day in preparing little nice cakes, &c., for our travelling basket, which aunt Martha was strictly charged not to lose sight of.

At last we were seated in the Falmouth mail, on a fine clear summer morning. We travelled all day and all night, and poor aunt Martha was half dead with fatigue on the following evening, when we were set down at the first-rate inn at Falmouth.

We begged the chamber-maid to conduct us immediately to a good two-bedded room.

"Oh, ladies," announced the woman pertly, "you must take what you can get; for we are so full, that I don't know where on earth to put half of you, owing to the wind having been so directly contrary for more than three weeks. Thus ships are every day coming in, while all the passengers for Spain have been waiting at Falmouth these three weeks, and we have got a consul, or ambassador, or something great of that kind, who has occupied all our best rooms for the last fortnight, with his secretaries and black footmen, and all the rest of it."

"Had we not better try another inn?" said I to my aunt Martha.

But she declared herself so very ill and fatigued, having never travelled before, that she could not move.

"And if you could," said the chamber-maid, "you would only fare the worse for your pains, since there is scarcely a bed to be found in all Falmouth."

"Well, what can you do for us?" I inquired despairingly, for I was both tired and spiritless.

"Why, as luck would have it, a gentleman as was going to Spain is just gone off by the London mail, because he had no more patience to wait here for change of weather, and his room has got two little beds in it; but it is up in the garret."

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"Never mind," said poor aunt Martha; and we were soon settled for the night in a very comfortless-looking room, far away from either chamber-maids or waiters, and nothing like a bell was to be discovered.

For the three first days of our inhabiting this garret, we really ran the risk of being starved, as it was impossible to procure any attendance. True, in scampering about the house to search for bread, tea, or butter, our noses were regaled by the excellent ragouts, as the consul's black servants were carrying them to their master's table.

"What a shame it is," said aunt Martha, "that a man is to be enjoying himself in this manner, with fiddles and ragouts, while two poor women in the same inn, are stuck up in a garret and left there to starve."

The captain of the vessel I proposed going out by, and to whom I paid on my arrival five and twenty guineas for my berth, was a peculiarly amiable man, and he was kind enough to invite us to dine with his wife.

We were very anxious to look about us a little; but aunt Martha had been told that Falmouth was such a wicked town that, for four days, we had kept our room.

The fifth, finding it impossible to procure any single thing to eat, good or bad, owing to the arrival of another vessel from the Peninsula, we were absolutely forced out of our delicate alarms, and resolved to go out and purchase a cold tongue and some biscuits. However, we first took a long country walk, and enjoyed such magnificent scenery as astonished even my aunt Martha, who declared that there was a boldness and grandeur about the views in Cornwall, which far exceeded anything she had seen in Devonshire.

As we entered the inn after filling our reticules with eatables, we stepped back while the consul or ambassador, I forget which, who ate up all our dinner and was the chief cause of such a terrible famine in the inn, stepped into his gay carriage. I thought I had

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seen his face, but I really could not recollect where. He appeared to recognise me too, by the manner he looked at me. We mounted up into our dismal room very much out of spirits, having ascertained that the wind was exactly in the same unlucky quarter.

The next day, the chamber-maid brought me a polite note from the consul to request the favour of our company to dinner, as often as we could make it convenient, *sans cérémonie*. He had often had the pleasure of seeing me in London, or he should not have taken the liberty, which he had the less scruple in doing having been led to understand we were so very badly attended on.

"Well! this is something like!" said my aunt Martha, bridling; for I forgot to inform my readers that my aunt Martha was still on the right side of fifty, and, though her countenance had never, even in her youngest days, possessed any other attraction than an expression of extreme good-nature and animation, still that was something, and then her habit, which was composed of curiously fine cloth, had now been altered into as becoming a form as possible. On the whole, my aunt Martha, while she admitted I must have been the principal attraction, really did hope she had stood for something in this invitation. In short, she was in such high spirits that, in the warmth of her heart, she insisted on offering the contents of our reticules to my *femme de chambre*.

"How I regret not having seen something of life a little sooner," said aunt Martha, as she stood before the glass settling her ruff. "I presume we shall meet those two secretaries at dinner to-day. One of them was remarkably handsome, I thought. Of course, they will excuse our travelling dresses. They must know your trunks are all on board. I should like, notwithstanding, to purchase a small red rose for this cap: it would set it off, and look somewhat more dressy for the evening, you know. As for you, they will be in love with you any how. That's the advantage of being handsome. No matter then what one wears."

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The consul's servant now entered the room in a gay livery, with his master's compliments, and a request to know if he was to expect the honour of our company at dinner.

"You will present our compliments, and say we propose doing ourselves that pleasure," I answered, and the servant left the room.

"The honour of our company," repeated aunt Martha, in a kind of ecstasy. "How very polite and condescending is this consul!"

"It is a pity he is so carroty. I thought he resembled Lord Yarmouth very much," said I. "I only hope he may turn out half as pleasant, and then I will forgive his carroty hair."

Aunt Martha was so long settling the form of her lace cap, that the consul and his two secretaries were waiting dinner for us when we entered the room. He politely introduced the young gentlemen to us. The name of the handsomest was Brown; I have forgotten the other. I whispered to the consul, at the very first opportunity, that my friend was unacquainted with my situation or the name of Lord Worcester, believing me to be an officer's wife of the name of Wilson, and he promised to be discreet. He was a very pleasing man, of about forty-five or fifty, and, being really under such obligation to him for his great politeness, I am particularly sorry that I cannot recollect his name. I hope, if ever he condescends to read my memoirs, that he will, through this medium, accept my thanks, and the assurance that I have not, with his name, forgotten his friendly hospitality towards us two poor unfortunate ladies.

The dinner was served up in the very best style of elegance. What a contrast to our scanty fare in our garret! After dinner, the young men proposed going to the play, since Mathews was engaged there for a few nights. The consul, however, declared we must excuse him; but good-naturedly requested the secretaries to chaperon us there, promising to have a good supper for us on our return.

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Accordingly, after our coffee, we were off in the consul's carriage to the play, where we were joined by the captain of the vessel, who brought me and my aunt Martha an invitation to a party for the following evening. The consul and secretaries were already invited.

"Oh, if I had but slipped my new purple silk dress into my portmanteau," whispered aunt Martha.

"Can we really be admitted in riding habits?" I inquired.

"Certainly," said the captain. "Almost the whole of the party are composed of travellers, whose luggage is on board, and I have been commissioned to invite whoever I conceive most amiable; and of course I began here," he continued, politely bowing to us all.

"Is it to be a state party?" I inquired.

"I am afraid so," said the captain; "for we do not sit down to supper till past two in the morning."

"We shall kill you," said I, turning to my aunt Martha.

"Oh dear no!" answered the good-natured woman; "I have experienced so much kindness from every stranger at Falmouth, that gratitude will keep me broad awake." Aunt Martha was indeed a general favourite with young people; because she ever entered into all their little cares and vexations with so much heart, and a real desire to advise what was best and most pleasant for them. Then a dozen English people meeting at Falmouth, when they are just about to separate and go, some of them, they know not to whom, naturally threw off all restraint, and made them appear to each other in the light of brothers and sisters.

We found an excellent supper ready, and the good consul was himself making us some punch, in case we should happen to be tired of champagne and claret. After supper we had a waltz. Mr. Brown kindly undertook to give my aunt Martha her first lesson, which created much merriment. It was nearly three o'clock before we got to bed, and in this manner we kept it up for almost three weeks, dining regularly, when not otherwise engaged, at the consul's table.

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Every evening we went either to a play or a party, and the mornings we passed on board, or walking, or riding about. My health was scarcely ever so good as during the time I spent at Falmouth, nor do I recollect ever to have been thrown into society where there was so much vivacity and wit and no trouble in dressing for it.

I had been an unusual length of time without letters from Lord Worcester, and, as I could not doubt their being immediately forwarded to me by Mrs. Edmond, if any had arrived at Charmouth, I grew uneasy ; and, having learned by accident, that a young officer who had just arrived from headquarters was in the house, I requested in a note that he would allow me to ask him a few questions. He came to me instantly, and in answer to my various inquiries about Worcester, with whom he said he was not personally acquainted, he hinted something of a story, that Mrs. Archdeacon, the sister of the paymaster's second wife, who formerly made such an attack on Worcester's virtue at Brighton, and who was living with her husband at Lisbon, had been run away with by the Marquis of Worcester.

"Are you certain of this?" I inquired, without, I confess, much agitation.

"He was not," he said ; "but it was a fact that Mrs. Archdeacon had left her husband, and gone up to the army with somebody ; though, as she arrived there just as he had left headquarters on his way to England, he could not take upon himself to say that she was with Lord Worcester. He knew that the Marquis, when he last came down to Lisbon, had been in the habit of dining with Mr. Archdeacon and his wife."

"This fool!" thought I, "after tormenting his parents, and keeping me here lest he should die!—after refusing the prayers of his father, whose very life seemed to depend on his leaving me, suddenly takes another woman away, notwithstanding his last letter was so full of solemn vows of everlasting constancy as any he ever wrote. What steadiness could I expect

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from such an ass as Worcester? I'll go to London: that's settled! Life is short, and I have been quite patient enough. I don't care one straw about money; but I must have something like enjoyment, of some sort, before I die. Another story decided me. I heard, two days after my interview with the officer, it was whispered about Lisbon, that, supposing Harriette Wilson made an attempt to join Lord Worcester, the English Ambassador had the power to get her put on an American ship and sent to America!

All this might, or might not, be true; but certainly I was not disposed to try it. Then came more stories, from different quarters, concerning Worcester and Mrs. Archdeacon. "They cannot be wholly false," thought I, "or he would write." In fact there was one person, who had no sort of interest in deceiving me, and he acquainted the consul that Mrs. Archdeacon certainly did go up to the army to join Lord Worcester, and that she was then actually staying with him.

"I have received letters which require my instant presence in London," said I to my aunt Martha, at which, though she expressed the greatest surprise, still she was delighted, as I did not mean to leave England. The captain returned me half my five and twenty guineas, and after taking our leave of our kind friends, who expressed sincere regret at the loss of our society, I took my place for the next day in the mail, not for Charmouth but London.

It was a tremendously long journey; but I was tired of the country, tired of suspense, disgusted with the whole set of Beauforts, and dying to be refreshed once more by the sight of Meyler's bright expressive countenance.

The mail stopped a short time at Charmouth, where I left my aunt Martha, took a most affectionate leave of the whole family, and late the next night I arrived at my sister Fanny's house in London.

CHAPTER XXXI

MEYLER was in the country, unacquainted with my arrival. Fanny declared it would be absolute madness, not to make the Duke do something for me before I wrote to Meyler, and, in short, absolutely teased me day and night till I wrote to His Grace, to say that I was now ready to put myself under the protection of Mr. Meyler, as soon as he should have provided for me according to his first proposal of giving me £500 a year. The Duke wrote declaring that he had never offered so much. I had the proposal of that sum from His Grace's man of business. "I now offer you £300," continued the Duke in his letter; "more than that I must decline."

It was not in my nature to stick out for money, so I agreed to the £300, and the Duke set his attorney to work to draw up the papers.

In the meantime, when I least expected it, came two large parcels from Worcester. He had not seduced Mrs. Archdeacon, for Mrs. Archdeacon had followed him up to the army whether he would or not, and he had sent her back immediately, and wished her dead for her disgusting assurance: and he adored me &c. &c. as usual.

I then wrote to the Duke of Beaufort, to say that I could not immediately put myself under the protection of Mr. Meyler owing to circumstances having changed; therefore he must not get the annuity made out under that idea. Soon after this, the Duke heard of Mrs. Archdeacon and, believing his son had forgotten me, kindly wrote me word he would now do nothing

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for me, and I might starve if I did not like to live with another man.

I could no longer endure the Duke's excessive selfishness calmly, and therefore assured him that I had still many letters with promises of marriage from Lord Worcester, written since those I had delivered up to him, trusting to the frail reeds, his generosity and honour, all which were at that time in my possession.

The Duke now wrote me a most insulting and impertinent letter, declaring that, if I was humble and civil he had no objection to give me a small sum for my letters ; but recommended me to be moderate in my demand, otherwise he should not think them worth attending to or taking any notice of. This time the Duke had the honour of putting me in a passion, and I consequently wrote to this effect.

“Your Grace must excuse my flattering, with civility, you whose conduct has been so invariably selfish, mean and artful towards me, as to have at last inspired me with perfect contempt. Having your promise of £300, provided I fulfil certain conditions, without one bit of the civil humility you recommend, I beg to acquaint you that if the annuity is not made out directly. I will publish the promise of marriage, and put an execution into your house for the annuity.”

This letter had the desired effect, and the annuity was made out immediately, although I forget what excuse the Duke offered to me for reducing it to two hundred a year, or why I consented to the reduction. This last annuity was drawn out with a condition that I should never once write to Lord Worcester, nor hold any kind of communication with him. Mr. Treslove of Lincoln's Inn advised me not to accept a restricted annuity ; but I declared I could not but fancy myself safe, since Worcester, of course, in case he should be the cause of my losing this, possessed too good a heart to suffer me to be unprovided for : so the

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thing was witnessed and signed, and I gave up all the letters once more to His Grace of Beaufort, who, having written to acquaint his son of what he had done for me, and on what conditions, Lord Worcester wrote a parcel of very pathetic letters to my sister Fanny : he wished me happy : he knew well that he should never be allowed to see me again : he did not think I could have agreed never to write or speak to him again : he had heard that I was with Mr. Meyler ; but, even in that case, he could not fancy my having cut him.

Three or four letters came to Fanny in the same style. At last he wrote to me : it was impossible to resist addressing me, cruelly as I had left him, &c. &c. &c. &c.

"So it is, very mercenary, cruel, and unnatural," said I to Fanny, after having finished his lordship's letter to me : "in short, were he to be killed abroad I should never enjoy another hour's rest :" and in spite of all they could say or do to prevent me, I wrote to tell Worcester, that I trusted to God and to his good heart, for seeing that I was somehow provided for ; but that nothing should again induce me to cut him, while I had any reason to believe him still fond of me and unhappy for my sake.

Soon after I had despatched this letter, the first half-year of the allowance becoming due, I received £100 from the Duke of Beaufort's attorney, and in less than a month afterwards the same attorney applied to me for the £100 back again.

"What do you mean, pray ?" I asked.

"Why," answered the attorney, "Lord Worcester has acquainted his father that you have written to him, and therefore, since you are not entitled to that £100, the Duke insists on its being returned."

"Upon your honour does the Duke really wish to take from me the means of existence, even if I effectually and for ever separate myself from his son ?"

"Of course," answered the attorney.

"And the Duke of Beaufort wishes to see the

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woman, who, but for her generosity and feeling towards his family, had long since been his daughter, thrown on the wide world without a shilling?"

"He certainly is very angry with me for having paid you the £100, which I must lose out of my own pocket if you do not return it, since His Grace, being no longer obliged to do anything, will never give you twenty pounds as long as he lives."

"Not if I continue separated from Worcester?"

"Certainly, not even then. The fact is, His Grace believes that his son has left you altogether."

"What then is to become of me?"

"That is a matter of perfect indifference to His Grace and also to me. I only want to know if you mean to oblige me to obtain the hundred pounds back again by law."

I rang the bell.

"Show this man downstairs," said I, and I retired to my dressing-room.

Strange as it may appear, I was not in any respect put out of spirits at the idea of having lost £200 a year, and I do not believe I should at that time have eaten less dinner than usual, if I had lost £200 again: so little did I care for money, or anything money could buy, beyond clean linen and bread and milk; but I was deeply hurt to think that, do what I would to deserve it, no one would like me: and there was nothing on earth, half so desirable, half so consoling to me, as the esteem and steady friendship of others. For this I had left the gay world, and buried myself in a village. It was to ensure the esteem of the Beauforts that I refused to become one of them, and certainly, as I told the Duke when he called on me, Dowager Duchess sounds better than Dowager Dolly. Alas! no one cared for me! In a very desponding temper, I sat down, and wrote to Meyler as follows:

"It is long, very long, since I heard from you, and, like the rest of the world, I take it for granted you have forgotten me, else I had been yours, and yours

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only, as long as you were disposed to protect me. I always liked you ; but twice the love I ever felt towards you would not have made me act unfeelingly towards anybody breathing, while I knew or fancied they deserved my gratitude. The reward for this steadiness in what I believed was right is that all have forsaken me : even Lord Worcester has turned against me, and written me romantic professions latterly in cold blood, on purpose, as it seems, to betray me by the goodness of my heart, with sending him an answer which, by law, would deprive me of the small annuity which had been granted for my future existence.

“The money is nothing !—I never cared about money ; but all this harsh treatment wounds me more than I can describe to you. And you too have forgotten me, *n'est ce pas ?* If you have not, I hope you will tell me so by return of post. In the meantime, God bless you, dear Meyler.

“ HARRIETTE WILSON.”

By the earliest post Meyler wrote me a letter, the style of which was unusually romantic. He should be in town on the same day I received his answer. He had believed me in Spain, and had relinquished all hopes of me for ever. He had won a considerable wager by my dear, kind letter ; but was too happy to enrich himself at any man's expense, therefore refused to accept a guinea of it. “I don't think,” Meyler went on, “I don't believe you would again say I am cold, if you could read my heart at this moment, and understand how deeply impressed I feel with gratitude towards my beloved Harriette. Never mind Worcester's annuity, for you and I will never part.

“I would not marry any woman on earth, and I am sure I shall never entertain so high an opinion of another as I have had good reason to encourage towards you : so yours, beloved Harriette, for ever and ever : full of happiness and haste to follow this letter, yours most devotedly affectionate,

“ RICHARD WILLIAM MEYLER.”

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It is not my intention to dwell on Meyler's love or Meyler's raptures, since such subjects in prose are very prosy. Meyler struck me as having grown much more handsome than when we last parted ; but this might be only my own fancy, having seen nothing like a beauty, except Beau Fisher, during the last twelve months.

We hired a very excellent house in the New Road, close to Gloucester Place, and, for the first fortnight, we were both in love, and did not quarrel ; but, alas ! in rather less than three weeks I discovered that Meyler, the lively Meyler, was one of the worst-tempered men in all England ! This was very hard upon one, who, like myself, had been spoiled and indulged by a man, who was ever a slave to my slightest caprices ! I cannot describe Meyler's temper, for I never met with anything in the way of temper at all to be compared to his. It was a sort of a periodical temper ; and, when he had passed a whole day in sweet soft conversation, I was perfectly sure that a storm was at hand for the next day, and *vice versa*.

I must confess, however, that I was sometimes a very tyrant towards Meyler ; and yet, I know my temper is naturally good ; but my feelings towards Meyler were all made up of passion. I neither esteemed nor trusted him ; and yet I was never so jealous of any other man. There was, in fact, an expression in Meyler's countenance of such voluptuous beauty, that it was impossible for any woman to converse with him in cold blood after he had dined. One night, as he sat in the Duchess of Beaufort's box, I left my own and sent in the box-keeper on the Duchess's side of the house, to request he would come out and speak to a person in the passage. He immediately obeyed my summons.

"Meyler," said I, in a hurried tone of voice, "if you return, even for an instant, to the Duchess of Beaufort's box, we part this night and for ever. I cannot endure it."

"Then I will stay with you all the evening," said

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Meyler, flattered rather than angry with me, for such jealousy, as he knew, I had never felt towards Lord Worcester.

"Why will you agitate yourself for nothing?" said Meyler, when we got home, this being his good-tempered night.

"You know you did once love the Duchess of Beaufort," I replied.

"Never," said Meyler. "Worcester and I, you know, were at Christ Church together," he continued, "and, one day, when I was too young to have ever compassed an intrigue, in any higher line than what boys usually find in the streets of Oxford, he presented me to his mother, who, you know, is a very fine woman of her age: this you will the more readily admit, because there is certainly a very striking resemblance in your picture. No woman in fine clothes would have come amiss to me at that time; and I certainly felt a strong desire for the Duchess; but without entertaining the shadow of a hope, notwithstanding she always distinguished me with unusual attention, as you have heard from others as well as from myself; till, one night, when I was staying at Badminton in the absence of the Duke, I happened to say that the cold had affected my lips and made them sore. It was as late as twelve o'clock. Her Grace desired me to accompany her to her dressing-room, that she might give me some cold cream. When I entered, her night-clothes were hanging to air near the fire. We were alone. I hesitated. In another instant I might have ventured to take this midnight invitation as a hint; but, unluckily, my Lady Harrowby, who probably suspected something improper, entered the room like our evil genius."

Meyler has repeated this story to so many people besides myself, Napier and Sir Harry Mildmay, that it will be folly to affect a denial of it. Meyler's greatest enemy never accused him yet of uttering an untruth.

Meyler led me but an unhappy life during the first

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year of our living together. His jealousy was downright selfishness ; for he would be jealous of my pianoforte, if that instrument amused me. He was in fact always jealous, unless I was counting the minutes of his absence. If I procured a private box to witness a play, *tête-à-tête* with my sister Fanny, he would send a note by his coachman to this effect :

“ DEAREST HARRIETTE,—I send a carriage to convey you to the play, to prove my wish to put no restraint on your wishes ; but if for my sake you would stay at home, I should feel both grateful and happy, and will return to you as soon as possible.”

He often left me to pass a week with the Beauforts at Badminton, and this never failed to render me completely wretched.

“ My God,” said Meyler, one day, striking his head violently with his hand, “ what am I to do ? I would rather blow my brains out than be thus the slave of any woman. Mine is not the passion of a day, or a year. I shall never cease to love you ; but I must enjoy a little liberty.”

I was much struck with what Meyler said. “ This sort of affection may be more lasting than Worcester’s late unnatural rapture, which went off all at once,” thought I to myself, “ and Meyler is so rich, so very, very beautiful, and it would be so shocking to lose him altogether. I will therefore put up with him, in his own way, as long as I have reason to believe him constant to me. I ought to be grateful, since I know that half the women in London would fain tempt him to forget me.”

The next day Meyler agreed to dine with me and set off after dinner to Badminton. He came, I know, in fear and trembling, for he expected me to fret and shed tears as usual at the idea of his going to Badminton. So far from it, I played him all his favourite airs on the pianoforte, gave him an excellent dinner, and drank my proper allowance of champagne with

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spirit ; hoped he might pass a pleasant week at Badminton, and, feeling full confidence in his affection, should make himself happy with my books and music till he returned.

“ What is the matter ? ” I asked, suddenly observing that he could neither eat nor drink. He only sighed.

“ Do, my pretty little Meyler, tell me what you would be at ? ”

“ It would be impossible for you to keep up such delightful spirits, knowing I am about to visit a fine woman, if you loved me,” said Meyler, despondingly.

“ Oh nonsense ! ” I exclaimed, “ you have assured me you never mean to leave me, and I believe you, because you never yet told me a lie ; and a jealous woman is the most disgusting animal imaginable you know ; so let us enjoy time present, since you are so soon to leave me.”

“ I see you are delighted to get rid of me,” said Meyler, “ and I could never love, nor believe in the love of any woman, who was not madly jealous of me. I see your affection, and therefore I hate you, Harriette : so, in order to punish you, I will not go to Badminton at all.”

“ Bravo ! You’ll stay then with me ? ” said I, kissing him. “ Indeed, indeed, I but acted with indifference from dread of disgusting you ; but now, since you will stay, I am so very very happy.”

Meyler, being satisfied that it would make me miserable, set off for Badminton early the next morning. In the evening I went to my sister Amy’s where, among many others, I met Lord Hertford.

“ Is it possible, think you,” I inquired of his lordship, “ is it possible to pass one’s life with a man of bad temper ? ”

“ Better live on a bone,” answered his lordship, with his mouth full of cold partridge.

“ What do you know about living on a bone ? ” I asked, laughing at him.

“ Oh pray make up your mind at once, to leave that vile, ill-tempered Meyler,” said Fanny ; “ for his

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jealousy is really mere selfishness, and though he goes to balls and parties every night of his life, and does not return till five or six in the morning, he never fails to call here for Harriette in ten minutes after she is set down, declaring he is miserable till he knows her to be safe in bed," and there he leaves her.

"Cut him, cut him, by all means," said everybody at once, and then they talked of Worcester. Fanny had received a letter from him on that very day.

"I understand that Harriette and Meyler are living in a house we once inhabited together," said his lordship's letter. "Do pray tell her from me I wish her joy of her philosophy; but I do not profess any such feelings. I never could inhabit that house, at all events, with any other woman."

This letter would have affected me some time before; but I was now sick and disgusted with the Beauforts and all their proceedings; neither could I reconcile to myself the idea of Worcester having made his father acquainted with the letter he induced me to write; and so lost me my annuity.

Lord Hertford wanted to set me down; but I positively refused. "Well then," whispered his lordship, "you really must pay me a visit at my little private door in Park Lane. You say you are going to the play to-morrow night, and you know you can rely on my discretion. The King dines with me; but His Majesty will leave me before the play is over, and I will open the door for you myself after my people are gone to bed, and you shall find everything ready and comfortable."

"You may then depend on seeing me," said I, and I took my leave.

The next evening Fanny, Julia, and I, were all seated in a private box at Covent Garden by seven o'clock, accompanied by two friends of theirs whose names I have forgotten; and we were, I think, afterwards visited at the Theatre by Lord Rivers.

"Are you hungry?" said I to Julia, just as the curtain dropped.

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“Very,” they both answered in a breath, and Fanny declared that nothing made her so hungry as sitting out a long play, after hurrying to it before one has half finished one’s dinner. I said that we now lived in the age of fairies, and that a good-natured one would this night tap some door with her wand and it should fly open and disclose a magnificent repast, served out on gold and silver, and composed of every delicacy which could possibly be imagined.

“What is the use of putting one in mind of all these good things,” said Fanny, “when, for my part, I shall think myself happy if my maid has saved us a bone of mutton, or even half a pint of porter these hard times?”

“Now what would you say if I had discovered a fairy, witch, or magician, who would this very night do all I have named for us?”

They were a long while before they would listen to me; but from my earnestness they at last really began to think I had hit upon some odd plan of giving them a fine supper, and promised to be led by me. Both of them had once been shown Lord Hertford’s private apartments, some years back, from Seomore Place; but they had never seen the little private entrance out of Park Lane, and had nearly forgotten the whole together. We were set down by my desire at some short distance from Lord Hertford’s little private door, and it was such a very dark night I was obliged to feel my way to it.

“Where on earth are you taking us to?” said Julia in alarm. “Here are no houses, and this place is really dangerous. For God’s sake let us return to the carriage directly.”

“Pray don’t be alarmed, and, in half a minute, you shall see what the good fairy has provided for us.”

Having arrived at the little low door, which resembles that of a cellar, I tapped gently three times, and the door was immediately opened by Lord Hertford, who was absolutely struck almost dumb, at

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observing that he had three fair ladies to entertain instead of one. He just looked

How happy could I be with either
Were t'other dear charmers away.

However, though of course he was disappointed, he was too well-bred to complain ; and therefore turned the whole affair into a joke, saying he cut a comical figure, coming downstairs thus slyly with his miniature key, to let in a whole party.

The little winding staircase, covered with red cloth, conducted us to his beautiful apartments, where a magnificent supper was laid just in the fairy style I had described. Everybody was agreeably surprised except his lordship, who fully expected to have passed the evening *tête-à-tête* with me. Nevertheless, I must say, he contrived to support this terrible disappointment with infinite good-humour, and we returned at three in the morning delighted with our English night's entertainment, in which we partook the feast of conviviality as well as of reason, and the flow of wine as well as of soul.

Meyler returned to town in less time than he had named, because some man had laughed at the idea of my being constant. He soon began to quarrel again as usual. At the Opera he was offended if I stood in the room with my sisters. "I will retire before the curtain drops, if you accompany me," I used to say; but Meyler had fifty people to chat with in the round-room. He was a particular friend of Sir Harry Mildmay. Both were Hampshire men, and members of the same county; and the gay Sir Harry had ever a mind for all his friend's wives or mistresses, ugly or handsome : he was therefore continually setting us by the ears ; merely because I was among the few who had refused him.

"Meyler," he would say, after having seen him standing near me in the room at the Opera, "Meyler, why the deuce do you stand there with Harriette Wilson every night like a frightful shepherd, to be laughed at ? Why don't you take to intriguing with

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women of fashion? Do you know man, that you are by no means an ugly fellow?"

"I never thought I was anything like an ugly fellow, Sir Harry," answered Meyler, speaking slowly.

On another opera night, as I was waiting at the top of the stairs with my sister Fanny for Meyler to take me home, Sir Harry came flying up to me in affected surprise,—"Why I thought it was your ghost!"

"How so?"

"I really imagined that it was you, who went out just now with Meyler!"

"Is Meyler really gone without me, then?"

"I have this instant seen him hand a lady into his carriage, and step in after her," answered the Baronet.

I felt myself reddening with indignation. It rained fast. Fanny and Julia were going in Mr. Napier's chariot quite a different road, and there was no room to spare for me, and not a soul left in the room except Lady Heathcote and her party, and Amy, who was watching men at a distance, with a host of beaux.

"My carriage is much at your service," said Sir Harry Mildmay, "and I shall be very happy to put you down at your own door."

"What, has Meyler gone off and left you here by yourself?" said Amy, joining us, and speaking loud enough for Lady Heathcote to hear. Her ladyship looked as if she was much amused with the whole occurrence. I have a terribly proud spirit of my own, and greatly as I disliked the idea of seeming to encourage Sir Harry Mildmay, the temptation was now irresistible; so putting my arm under his and skipping gaily past Doctor Bankhead's dear friend, Lady Heathcote, I said I would forgive Meyler for cutting me as often as he was disposed to send me such a very amiable substitute. It was a dark night, and Mildmay's coachman drove like mad. Judge my surprise, on finding myself set down at Sir Harry's house in Brook Street, when I thought I was in the New Road. Sir Harry took hold of my hand as I stood on his steps, and laughingly tried to pull me into his house.

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“Really, Sir Harry, this is too absurd!—eloping with me, as though I were an innocent fool, who could be led to do any one thing which clashes with my humour.”

Sir Harry, at last finding it impossible either by joke or earnestness to induce me to enter his house, begged I would get into his carriage to be carried to my own house.

“No,” said I. “No power on earth shall induce me to enter your carriage again.”

My anger towards Meyler for his supposed neglect, having now cooled, I was beginning to be very unhappy about him, and very much out of humour with Sir Harry.

“I will walk home,” I said, “or at least, walk till I can find a coach, and I insist on your leaving me this instant.”

“That, my sweet Harriette, is quite impossible; and, since you are so obstinate as to insist on risking to catch your death of cold by walking home without a bonnet, I must accompany you.”

“It is quite fine again now,” answered I, and off I set accompanied by Sir Harry, having first fastened my shawl over my head.

My house in the New Road had a garden before it. I felt dreadfully afraid of finding Meyler there; and I almost wished Mildmay to remain at hand to protect me, in case he should grow violent before I could convince him of my innocence.

“If Meyler is not there, I will come in,” said Sir Harry.

I was really astonished at his assurance. “What do you think Meyler would say, if he found you in his house?” I inquired.

“Oh! hang Meyler! we would lock him out.”

I could not refrain from laughing at Mildmay’s excessive impudence.

“Is Mr. Meyler in the house?” I tremulously asked of the servant, who was coming down the garden to open the gate for us. The maid told me that Mr. Meyler had been there half an hour ago, and

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appeared much agitated when they informed him I was not returned from the Opera House.

"Where did he direct his coachman to drive to?"

"I think to Mrs. Sydenham's, ma'am," was the reply.

I saw that Mildmay was determined to enter the house with me; and, dreading the consequences of such a very mad action, I desired the servant to shut us out, since I should go and look for Mr. Meyler.

"Don't, don't," said Mildmay; but I insisted, and the street-door was closed upon us. We stood in the garden; and then for near a quarter of an hour I begged, entreated, and implored Mildmay to leave me, but in vain. Every instant I expected the return of Meyler: yet, frightened and agitated as I was, under the impression that I had thoughtlessly committed an imprudence for which I was likely to pay very dear, Sir Harry had no mercy on me.

At last, as good luck would have it, two drunken men observed us among the trees as they passed the house. It being rather moonlight, and not dreaming that the owner of it would be standing there at two o'clock in the morning with a gay man in silk stockings, they naturally concluded me to be some poor creature he had met with in the streets; so, knocking with their sticks between the iron railings of the gate, they bawled out, "I'll trouble you, sir, for ground-rent, if you please."

"Ground-rent! ground-rent! D—n your impudence," said Sir Harry, running after them; and I immediately knocked till my servant opened the door, when I bolted into the passage and safely barred out the gay baronet.

In about another half-hour, Meyler's carriage drove up to my door. I was in a dreadful fright; for the provoking Mildmay had confessed to me at last that he had not seen Meyler go out; but, on the contrary, he had left him in the upper room talking to Lord Palmerston. It was past three o'clock in the morning. I knew him to be very passionate. "He will kill me, of course," said I to myself, as he entered the

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room. Judge what was my surprise when Meyler, pale and trembling, took hold of my hands, kissed them, and then fixed his very expressive, inquiring eyes on my face.

“ You will not deceive me,” said he ; “ of this I am quite certain.”

I immediately declared upon my word I had nothing to conceal having done nothing wrong.

Meyler was in raptures.

“ When I came into the room to look for you, with the intention of bringing you home,” said Meyler, “ the first person I saw was Lady Heathcote ; and I could not help thinking she looked very oddly at me, as if she had been inclined to laugh at something ; and then I missed you from amongst your sisters. Having, upon inquiry, been told by Amy that Mildmay had taken you away in his own carriage, I asked for Julia and Fanny ; but they were gone with Napier ; and to Julia’s house I drove immediately. They knew nothing of you ; and Napier laughed so at my evident agitation, and would have made such fun of me all over the town, that my fear of the world, for which you always scold me so much, made me put the most violent restraint upon myself, to endeavour to conceal my anxiety by remaining quietly where I was for a quarter of an hour. However, they saw through it all ; and I left them to call at your sister Amy’s house. Amy said everything she possibly could to make me believe you were with Mildmay. I left her in disgust ; and determined to come here once more before I called on Sir Harry.”

I then told Meyler by what falsehoods Mildmay had induced me to accept his protection.

“ I shall never be the least angry with Sir Harry, as long as you steadily refuse him,” said Meyler ; “ because I have, for some time, wanted such a story to laugh at him about ; because he has so many against me, and by which he takes upon himself to amuse the females of my acquaintance.”

This accident roused the little indolent Meyler to

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pay me unusual attention for the next several weeks.
Ainsi va le monde!

One morning, when I called on him at his house in Grosvenor Square, I found him reclined on his *chaise longue*, in a very pensive attitude. On a table before him was a most unbecoming military cap, which appeared to belong to the militia, or might have been worn, for aught I knew, by the hero of some corps of volunteers.

“What is the matter, Meyler? and why is that frightful cap stuck up before you?”

“Ah!” said Meyler, with his usual slight, but sentimental sigh, “frightful indeed! And fancy a little, quiet, country gentleman like myself, sticking such a thing as that on his head!”

“What necessity can there possibly be for disfiguring yourself so?”

“Why, you see, I am obliged to be captain of the Hampshire militia, of which Lord Palmerston is colonel and commander,” continued Meyler, heaving another sigh, and looking most interestingly pensive, while his eyes were steadily fixed on the cap.

I could not help laughing; for there was in fact an originality about Meyler’s manner of saying mere trifles, which it would be impossible to describe. And then he spoke so very slow, and his mouth was such a model of beauty, that even nonsense came gracefully out of it.

“Meyler has brought his large dog over with him from Hampshire,” said Mildmay to me one evening at the Opera; “and he is at least half an hour saying his name.”

“What is his name?”

“Why Ch-a-n-c-e,” answered Sir Harry, mimicking him.

“Meyler is not stupid,” said I.

“Why, no,” replied Mildmay. “Meyler possesses a good understanding when one can give him a fortnight to consider things; but whenever impulse is required he is of no use on earth.”

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"I don't k-n-o-w t-h-a-t," I rejoined, imitating Meyler. "Some of his impulses are particularly good, I assure you."

Two days after the cap had made its appearance, Meyler's regimentals came home, with yellow facings; the ugliest, most vulgar-looking things, which could well be imagined. Meyler too had anything but the *air militaire* which ought to have set them off and made the best of them. He was a little, quiet hero of the old school, with the most beautifully delicate white hands, and he always wore silk stockings, nankeen breeches, and small knee-buckles. At last arrived a letter from the great commander-in-chief, Lord Palmerston. I have not a copy of his lordship's letter, so I do not mean to say that what follows is verbatim; though the said epistle was shown to me at the time and my memory is not apt to be treacherous.

"**MY DEAR MEYLER,**—It really is incumbent on us, as a matter of glory as well as honour, to attend to our Regimental duties, and, as I understand your tailor has carried home your handsome regimentals, with bright yellow facings, I trust you will accompany me into Hampshire next Tuesday, for the purpose of drawing our men out in a line, and making them go through their manœuvres, &c.

"Yours, dear Meyler, very truly,
"PALMERSTON."

Meyler, having perused the above letter, began by equipping himself in his bran-new, bright red and yellow regimentals, and, having placed himself opposite his large swing-looking glass for about a quarter of an hour, the next thing he did was to throw off his gay uniform in a passion, and then he sat down and addressed the following answer to Viscount Palmerston:

"**MY DEAR LORD PALMERSTON,**—Unfortunately I happen to be subpoenaed at the House of Commons for Tuesday night, which is what I regret, of course,

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infinitely ; but, be assured, I will not fail to distinguish myself in arms as soon as I have disposed of the Catholic Bill. In the meantime believe me very truly yours,

“ RICHARD MEYLER.”

“ Do you know that Lord Worcester is expected to bring home the next despatches ? ” said Fanny to me one night when we met in our opera-box.

“ It is all the same to me,” I replied, “ since he could be so selfish and vilely shabby as to acquaint his father I had written to him. I shall never respect or like him again.”

“ Yet,” said Fanny, “ I have this morning received a letter from his lordship, who writes of you in a very tender style. ‘ A friend of mine,’ says his lordship’s letter, ‘ saw my sweet, darling Harriette in Hyde Park, looking lovely. God bless her ! What would I give, but to see her pass this moment, even though she refused to acknowledge me.’ ”

“ Oh, that’s enough,” said I, interrupting Fanny, “ I am quite in a fidget, and cannot guess what Meyler is about, that he does not visit us to night as usual. I understand he is going to the Duke of Devonshire’s dress party, and the idea torments me wretchedly.”

I turned many an anxious glance towards the Duchess of Beaufort’s box in vain, as well as towards the door of my own. The curtain dropped, without our having seen anything of Meyler.

As I was descending the grand staircase in a very ill-humour, a well-known voice, from a little dark passage, called me by my name. Conceive my astonishment at seeing Meyler screwed up into a close corner, quite alone, in full regimentals. Fanny and I began to laugh heartily at him.

“ Good gracious Mr. Meyler, is it you ? ”

“ Why not show yourself to the admiring world, after the trouble of making yourself so very fine ? ” said Julia.

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" I am going to the Duke of Devonshire's dress ball, where there will be plenty more fools in the same ridiculous sort of costume ; and where, I hope, I shall not feel so much ashamed of myself ; but here I cannot for the life of me summon courage to face my acquaintance ; and so, here have I been stuck up in the dark for the last two hours, trying to get to your box ; yet ashamed even to venture to my own carriage, till everybody shall have left the house." How we all three did laugh at the poor little interesting hero ! and yet he looked so handsome, and his red coat reflected such a fine glowing tint on his transparent, pale cheeks, that I was selfish and wicked enough to determine against his exhibiting himself at His Grace of Devonshire's. Lord Hertford joined us in our little dark corner.

" Do not go, Meyler," said I, " pray do not go to the Duke's to-night."

" And why not ? " Lord Hertford asked.

" Because it will make me wretched," I answered.

" However," said Meyler, " this is the first time of my being invited ; and, as all the world will be there, I really must go. You may take my carriage, and I will get home to you as soon as possible."

" Do you return to Grosvenor Square first ? " I inquired.

" Yes," said Meyler, as he handed me into his carriage ; and then directed his coachman to take me home ; but I had scarcely got into Piccadilly when the fit of jealousy seized me with such overpowering violence that I suddenly pulled the check-string and requested to be conducted to Meyler's house. When there I, unannounced, walked up into his dressing-room.

" Meyler," said I, " I have given way at all times to your caprice and jealousy. This once humour mine, and I shall feel most grateful. My health and spirits are low to-night. Pray cut the Duke and return with me. It is the first time I ever interfered with your amusements, therefore do not refuse me."

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Meyler was obstinate.

"Well, then," said I, "I shall not return home alone. I propose going to Lord Ebrington's and making love to him."

This speech would have disgusted most men; but I knew Meyler.

"I am sure you would not leave me for Ebrington, handsome as he is," said Meyler.

"Upon my word I will, and this very night if he is to be found, and you refuse to return with me."

"Well, then, I must return with you," said poor Meyler, throwing off his unfortunate regimentals, and preparing to accompany me home.

The next time I met Lord Hertford he told me I was very wrong, and ought to have had more sense than to have attempted bringing Meyler home by force.

"You, on the contrary, are very right, my lord," answered I; "but then I really could not help it."

Soon after this Meyler went to hunt in Leicestershire, where, according to the rules of their society, I was told I could not accompany him. However, though Meyler and I were eternally at variance when together, yet we were ever miserable and jealous whilst separated. One day I lost all patience; and, ordering post-horses, went to join him at Melton by surprise. He appeared delighted to see me; and I was invited to dine every day that I should remain in Leicestershire at their club. The house was very comfortable, and their dinners most excellent; so much so, that I remember Meyler afterwards enticed away their man-cook, who died in his house in Grosvenor Square. And further I remember, that while the said dead cook's body was in Meyler's house his religious feelings would not permit him to peruse some books which were lent him, I believe by Lord Alvanly. These books, to say the least and best of them, were what Lord F. Bentinck would have called very loose.

The members of the Melton club led what I considered a very stupid sort of life. They were off at six in the morning, dressed up in old single-breasted coats, which

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once had been red, and came back to dinner at six. The carroty-haired Charlton contrived to become a member of this club. I allude to the young gentleman, who was concerned with Horace Seymour in the seduction of two young mantua-makers, and who then lamented, with so much real pathos, the sad loss of his circulars.

This man would not have been tolerated at Melton, but that Brummell once said he used good perfume. Still Meyler was such a sturdy, true, obstinate, English country gentleman, as to pronounce the man half-bred, impudent, and a bore. "And then," said Lord Alvanly, who was sitting with us at dinner one day when Charlton happened to be absent, "and then has such a d——n impertinent way of nick-naming us all fools."

"True," replied Berkeley Craven, "that is really disagreeable."

"I think we ought to take notice of it," said Meyler.

"You don't say so?" observed Alvanly, growing pale. "But then," continued Alvanly, "it is not my turn you know."

"Quite the contrary," retorted Meyler, "you are the man he has most insulted. Don't you recollect the other night, besides calling you a fool, he accused you of being an old clothesman?"

"Oh! That was because I am so often in the society of Jews."

"No, it was when you were selling one of your great coats, if I remember right," retorted Meyler.

"I see no harm in that," Berkeley Craven remarked; "I am sure I would sell anything I did not want, and I don't care to whom."

"Then, I suppose, Berkeley, you would have no objection to part with that coat?" said Meyler, alluding to a very threadbare one worn that evening by Mr. Craven, and speaking in his usual slow way.

Brummell, who had done us the honour to come over from the Duke of Rutland's where he was staying to dine with us, said that, though he knew little of the man Charlton, he could not but repeat, in common

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justice, what he had before stated, namely, that the perfume he used for his pocket handkerchief was unusually good.

The evening hunt-dress is red, lined with white ; and the buttons and whole style of it are very becoming. I could not help remarking that the gentlemen never looked half so handsome anywhere in the world, as when, glowing with health, they took their seats at dinner, in the dress and costume of the Melton hunt.

A day or two after this conversation about Charlton, that gentleman happened, by mere accident of course, to say to Alvanly, in answer to some remark he made about hunting, "Oh ! Lord bless your soul, no ! That is talking like a fool."

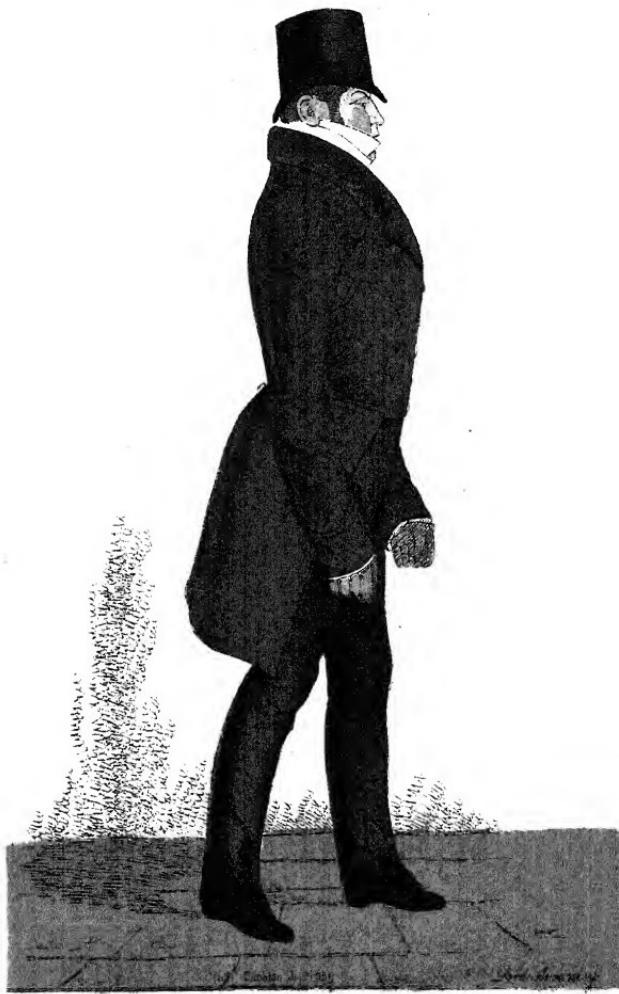
"Look you here, my good fellow," said Lord Alvanly, lisping in his usual queer way, "I will tell you what, you have got a trick of calling me a fool, which is what I disliked exceedingly from the first. In fact, I should have taken notice of it long ago, only I happened to be so devilishly afraid of fighting. This fact is well known. In short, I proved it beyond doubt, by cutting the army altogether directly I found that sort of thing was going on. I went into the army, it is true ; but, then, as I have often mentioned to my friends before, I conceived my regiment to be kept entirely as a body-guard to his Majesty. In other words, I never expected it would have left London."

Everybody began to laugh except Charlton, who did not exactly know how to take it.

"Gentlemen," added Alvanly, moving towards them, "it is not particularly feeling in you to laugh, when I am discussing a subject which is so very awful to me as fighting, and particularly at a moment when I am likely to become a principal."

He then turned his head towards Mr. Charlton, and resumed his discourse as follows :

"Now, you see, sir, my fears being so excessive as to fighting, I will give you leave to call me fool twice more after to-day ; but, by God, if you call me so a



Going to WHITE'S.

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third time during the whole course of my life, it is all over with me ; for you and I must fight ! ”

It so happened, as I have been very credibly informed, that lordly Charlton left off calling people fools from that hour. Not that I mean to insinuate that he was the least afraid of fighting : on the contrary, I rather imagine he must have, just at the time, hit upon Doctor Watt’s hymns, and been edified by them. They are really very good reading for a Sunday at Melton, and, if I remember right, there are two very impressive lines in one of the hymns, well calculated to work a reform in Mr. Charlton. They run thus :

And he is in danger of hell-fire,
Who calls his brother fool.

I forget whether Meyler got tired of me, or I of Melton, or of him ; but certain it is, I very soon returned to town. Meyler had no mind, no romance about him. His person was charming ; but that won’t do, even with gentlemanlike manners, for one’s every-day companion. Meyler was not up to me either in hand or heart. I could have been more constant, I often used to say to myself by way of excuse, when I felt anything like a new fancy coming across my imagination ; but then he who suited me was married, and how can such an active mind, such a warm imagination, live on air ?

These reflections used to occur to me latterly, as often as I happened to meet Lord Ebrington, with whom I had now only a mere bowing acquaintance. Formerly, when I was very young, we had mutually sought each other. I always thought him very handsome and sensible-looking, and what to me is better than all the rest, he appeared as shy, proud, and reserved as Lord Ponsonby ; but, on acquaintance, we had discovered that we were too much alike in temper to agree. Afraid of each other, we could do nothing together, so we cut in a week ; except, as to the mere bow, which would not in common civility be avoided

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when we passed each other. Lately, since I had found Meyler's temper become so provoking, it had struck me more than once that, if Ebrington were to try again, we might agree better. However there were three reasons why I did not make the first advances to his lordship. In the first place, though Meyler was a torment to me, my jealousy prevented me from throwing him upon the world : in the second, I could not deceive any man : in the third, I said to myself, "why should Lord Ebrington like me now when my health and freshness are gone, though he did not care for me in the days of my earliest youth and beauty ?" "The case is hopeless," thought I, after casting one wishful look behind me on Lord Ebrington, who, meeting me on my entrance into town from Leicestershire, smiled sweetly as he made me a very graceful bow ; "therefore I'll finish writing my play, which I began so long ago, instead." I took it from Molière's celebrated comedy of *La Malade Imaginaire* ; but it was by no means a literal translation. I reduced it to three acts, and altered what I conceived was too coarse and indecent for an English audience. It only afforded me altogether employment for three days, and, when done, I was far from sanguine as to its success. What indeed could I be expected to know concerning the Drama, who had seen so few plays in my life !

Being acquainted with Mr. Charles Young the performer, I ventured to request him to look over my dramatic labours. In three or four days he called upon me.

"Do you know," said he, "that this is a very clever work ?"

" You don't say so ?" answered I.

" How you happened to be so capital, in this way, I cannot conceive, since you can have found little time for study. However, this being such a hasty scrawl, you must get it fairly copied, and I will then present it to the manager, Mr. Charles Kemble, with very little doubts of its success."

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A friend of my own was kind enough to transcribe my comic efforts for me, and I returned it to Mr. Young, who sent me a note to acknowledge its receipt, in these words :

“ MY DEAR MISS WILSON,—I have received your manuscript, and shall lose no time in presenting it to the managers, who will bring it out immediately, that is, if they know a good thing when they see it.

“ Yours truly,
“ C. YOUNG.”

In about a week, the managers returned my little comedy to Mr. Young, stating in a note which that gentleman forwarded to me, that they did not think it calculated to forward the interests of the stage, &c. I know not whether Young or the managers were wrong in their opinion of this piece; but certainly I bore the disappointment with much philosophy, having only written it *pour passer le temps*.

As I had really and truly formed a very high opinion of Mr. Young’s judgment and good taste, even before his praise of my play, I thought I might as well show it to Elliston. I felt quite certain that Young would not have advised me to take the trouble of getting it copied, if it had not been his real decided opinion that it was fit for the stage; so I wrote as follows to Mr. Elliston, whom I then believed to be a very gentlemanly, pleasant old fellow.

“ MY GOOD MUNTEBANK,—You, who were born and created for my particular sport and amusement, pray come and see me on Sunday evening at seven o’clock, if you have time. I want to give you a little dramatic piece to look over at your leisure, and I want at the same time to shake hands with you.

“ Yours truly,
“ H. W.”

Elliston sent me this answer on Sunday morning :

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“ MY DEAR MADAM,—The probable prevention to the pleasure I proposed to myself, in passing an hour in your company, was removed ; but I am laid by the heels with a sharp fit of gout, a grievous enemy to Sunday evening meetings. I do not know whether you think this a feather in my cap ; but I would well wish that the feather had been fixed on the foot, that, like Mercury, I might have escaped from my confinement. If I chose to pursue the image, I might add, my visit, like his, would have been to a goddess.

“ I am glad you think I was born to please you :—No, ‘to amuse’ was the phrase, and, as Benedict says, there is a double meaning in that.

“ It appears pretty evident, madam, that I must not play the fool in private with you. God send me a good deliverance ! I have been out with my crutch, my pillow, and my large shoe, in the carriage to-day : a seducing set of paraphernalia for *un beau garçon*. There are, however, goodly reasons why I should think that Tuesday or Wednesday will see me quite myself, which you will say is promising but little. I promise nothing, but leave all to time which, grey-beards say, bringeth everything to light.

“ MOUNTEBANK.”

In about another week, I wrote to him again as follows :

“ Why don’t you come, Mountebank ?

“ Many thanks for the private box you were kind enough to send me an order for last night. Your Jew was a masterpiece of fine, chaste acting, nothing overdone—no grimace !—the true, benevolent simplicity of the good old Jew, real and genuine. Tell me, by bearer, when you will come, for I am like the lady in Tom Thumb—I cannot stay.

“ Yours truly and obediently,

“ H. W.”

Elliston sent me word he would be with me by eight

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in the evening, at which hour, finding himself, as usual very tipsy, he despatched this note, by his servant :

“ MY DEAREST MADAM,—Say not you, in return, ‘ oh false promiser ! ’ Well, if I must bear blame, at least I will be heard. The day has been unruly, and the difficulty of procuring a coach very great : besides, when I come to you, let me be allowed the Da Capo of your own sweet words, I cannot stay. Now, if I dared to suppose that disappointment had soured you I would, with soothing words, disarm you, and try to dissipate the frown from your brow.

“ What is the matter between you and Livius ?

“ I am not conscious of having done any harm. In all my transactions with that gentleman it has been my most anxious desire to show him attention and to do him justice ; and, I sincerely assure you, that I have run his musical comedy as a first piece beyond discretion.

“ If it is a fine morning on Sunday, I may walk up to your house early. In short, as you say that I am an odd creature, think me so still, and always believe that my heart is right, though my head may be wrong ; so I will call upon you when I can and, what is more, when I like. Hurrah for impudence !

“ ANDREW MERRY.”

There is enough of Elliston. I sent him my farce, which he acknowledged in a letter now in my possession, where he promises to take an early opportunity of reading it. Since that, we have quarrelled, and I have vainly asked him to return me my farce or pay me for it. Elliston has never had the honesty to do the one or the other.

CHAPTER XXXII

WHEN I returned from Leicestershire, Colonel Parker was arrived from Spain, and Worcester hourly expected with despatches. My father proposed separating himself from my mother, and retiring to his native country the Canton de Berne, should the expected peace be proclaimed ; and he, as well as Lord Berwick, wished my mother to reside with the younger part of her family in France.

Lord Worcester, when he brought over the despatches shortly afterwards, appeared, from what my sister Fanny, whom he often visited, told me, to have taken rather a dislike to me, or he was trying to do so, and he strove hard to muster up another passion for another woman. The only flattering part of this melancholy fact was, that every woman he made up to had been reckoned like me in feature or expression.

The noble marquis made up to the late Miss Georgiana Fitzroy, who, as I have heard many people say, very closely resembled me. He danced with her and ogled her for a fortnight, and then he was obliged to return to his military duties in Spain. However, he first went, accompanied by the present Lord Glengall, to take a hasty leave of his new flame. Lord Glengall, who waited in an adjoining room, declared, as Amy says, that he heard Miss Fitzroy sobbing in hysterics ; and I have some reason to believe that Lord Worcester could only sooth her by promises of marriage.

When this account was mentioned to the Duke of Leinster, His Grace asserted that Miss Fitzroy had tried hysterics with him as a bold stroke for a husband

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of high rank ; but, that, though not wise, he was not quite so easily caught neither, as all that came to.

While Lord Worcester was in town, Fanny had permitted him to visit her, for the sole purpose of endeavouring to make him do something for me ; but Lord Worcester seemed to have lost every atom of feeling in the wars, and, from a shy, sensitive, blushing, ardent boy, had returned a cold-blooded and most shameless profligate, like the great, the glorious wonder of his age, Wellington.

France being now open to us, Meyler expressed his intention of taking a trip to Paris. We had some very serious quarrels just at this time.

"Meyler," said I to him, a short time before we went abroad, "you and I cannot live together. You are honest enough to acknowledge that your temper is abominable ; for my part, I do not believe that there exists a woman who could endure it. I hold myself no longer therefore under your protection, mind. I don't mean to say that I will be unfaithful to you ; but from this hour I am my own mistress, and you, when we meet any visitors, are to be turned out the first moment you treat me with a want of politeness."

Meyler could not bear this plan for any length of time, and we had in one month mutually agreed to part at least twenty times over, and then made matters up again. The deuce was in us both. We really hated each other, and yet sheer jealousy kept us together. At last, Meyler assured me that, though he had often talked of parting, he had never been so determined till now ; and to effect this object, and prevent the possibility of our reconciliation like fools, only to quarrel again the next instant, he should leave town and not return until we were both attached and engaged elsewhere.

This resolution made me, I do confess, very unhappy. To conceal my real feelings I dressed gaily, I went blazing to the opera and to every other place of resort where I might expect to meet Meyler's

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friends, one of whom told me that Meyler was actually staying at Melton quite alone, the hunting season being at an end. In about three weeks he came to town. I dreaded encountering him at the opera, since we were to cut each other dead, and yet the effort must be made. He shall see me merry, and surrounded with handsome admirers, if I am to die the next hour. The little, provokingly handsome sugar-baker must not know that I still remember him, and am dying for his kiss.

For several opera nights I saw Meyler in the Duchess of Beaufort's box, and in the round-room, and we mutually cut each other. At last, he came slyly up to our party and addressed my sister Fanny. His beautiful, white, *petit* hand was held towards mine, and I pressed it, *malgré moi*, for an instant, without speaking to him, and the next moment found myself seated in his carriage on our way home.

"Don't tell my friends," said Meyler. "I have so sworn never to speak to you again, that I shall not be able to support their incessant quizzing."

"We will not again attempt to live with each other," said I. "Our tempers never can assimilate, and I will be as free as the air we breathe; but you may, indeed you must, come and visit me."

"Swear then, upon your honour and soul, that you will acquaint me if you should prove unfaithful to me."

I did swear not to deceive him: and then we hoped to go on more comfortably under our new arrangement.

"I shall go to Paris in my own carriage, and establish myself in my own lodgings," said I; and to this proposition Meyler was obliged to agree. He promised to follow me, and be there a week after my arrival.

My dear mother had disposed of her house at Brompton very unwillingly, in compliance with the wishes of Lord Berwick and her husband. Her departure, as well as mine, was delayed by a circumstance which I will now relate.

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Colonel Parker, being one of those sort of animals whose constitution requires variety, had been, of late, cooling towards Fanny, his most amiable and, I will swear, most faithful companion, the mother of his child too, and merely because he had been in possession of her person too many months for his habit of variety. Having left her one morning to pay a visit to a relation of his, where he was to meet his cousin, Fanny asked him, in joke, if he was certain he should not make love to her.

“Love to her!” exclaimed Parker, “she is the greatest fright imaginable. I wish you could once see her. It would set your mind at rest for the remainder of your life, on that head at least.” The lady’s name was Popham, if I recollect right.

As Parker promised to return to Fanny in a week, she grew uneasy when almost a fortnight had elapsed without seeing or even hearing from him. At last, somebody told her that he was in town, and residing at an hotel in Vere Street. Fanny set off that very instant by herself and on foot to the hotel, declaring her conviction of its utter impossibility. She was, however, dreadfully agitated, *quand même*. She met Parker on the steps of the hotel, and placed her hand upon his arm, absolutely breathless and speechless.

“Fanny,” said Parker, “you are no doubt surprised that I did not either go to you or inform you of my arrival in town.” Fanny looked earnestly in his face, —“but,” continued Parker,—and he hesitated.

“Pray, speak,” said Fanny, and she pressed both her hands on her left side. She had of late often complained that she felt pain there; but at that moment it was agonising and seemed almost to produce suffocation, which might have been seen by the purple tint of her quivering lips.

“I have bad news for you,” said Parker, rather confused than agitated. “I am going to be married,” he continued, observing that Fanny could not speak.

At these words Fanny’s whole countenance underwent such a violent change that Parker was terrified

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and, calling a hackney-coach, they stepped into it and came home together while I was sitting with Julia, at whose house Fanny still resided.

The little sitting-room which Fanny had furnished and fitted up for herself was a back parlour, looking into a garden. Her veil was down when she descended from the coach, and, though we expected they would have come upstairs, Julia and I determined not to interrupt them. I was to pass the day with Julia: and, when the dinner was on the table, the servant was desired to knock at Fanny's door and inform Colonel and Mrs. Parker that we were waiting. The servant brought us word that they must beg to be excused. I became uneasy and, without knocking or any further ceremony, entered the room. Fanny was sitting on the sofa with her head reclined on the pillow. She was not in tears and did not appear to have been shedding any; but her face, ears, and throat were visibly swollen, and her whole appearance so changed that I was frightened.

“ My dear Fanny, what is the matter ? ”

Fanny did not even lift her eyes from their fixed gaze on the earth.

“ Colonel Parker,” said I, “ for God’s sake, tell me what has happened.”

“ She heard some unpleasant news too abruptly,” said Colonel Parker.

“ I implore you not to inquire,” said Fanny, speaking with evident difficulty. “ I would not be left alone this night, and I have been on my knees to entreat Parker to remain with me. He refuses.”

“ Surely you do not mean to leave her in this state ; ” said I, addressing Parker.

“ I can do her no good. It is all too late, since my word is passed and in ten days I shall be the husband of another. My presence irritates her and does her harm.”

“ Fanny, my dear Fanny,” said I, “ can you make yourself so completely wretched for a man who acts without common humanity towards you ? ”

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"Pray, pray, never expect to console me in this way," said Fanny impatiently. "I derive no consolation from thinking ill of the father of my dear child."

"Come to bed, dear Fanny," said I, taking hold of her burning hand.

"Yes, I shall be better in bed."

We assisted her upstairs. She seemed stupefied, and could neither speak nor shed tears. At about one Parker left her.

Fanny kept her bed for two days, and, on the third, she thought herself much better. "All I entreat of you is to keep secret from me the day of their marriage and everything connected with it," said Fanny. We promised to do our best to prevent her hearing a word more on the hateful subject.

Fanny changed the conversation immediately, and forced herself to go into society as usual ; but her lips now assumed a blueish tint, whenever she made the slightest exertion, or hurried upstairs, or walked fast, and she would put her hand on her left side, and say, "There is something very wrong and odd about my heart, of that I am certain ; and so, as it may be of use to others, perhaps to some of my sisters, I hope that when I am dead you will have my body examined."

There was a man, a brute I should rather say, whose passion she had good-naturedly laughed at, who actually brought her a piece of Parker's wedding-cake, and informed her of the day and hour on which they were married. Fanny almost went on her knees to implore us not to enter her bedroom for the whole of the next day. After that, she appeared nearly the same as usual, except that she coughed rather more, and began to discover that a single glass of wine always produced fever ; but she looked as fresh and lovely as ever. Her character however was completely changed, from gay to serious, and she was always occupied in writing or reading.

When I went to France, Fanny's mind had been

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much relieved by some kind letters from Parker, assuring her that he would, on his return to town, always visit her and his child. He even led her to believe that his marriage had been merely a convenient one, in order to obtain promotion in the army, and that his heart had never changed.

Fanny talked soon of joining me in Paris. Meyler, with whom I had not once quarrelled since I had received him only as a visitor, promised to follow me in a week. As to Julia, she could not leave her dear long-backed Mr. Napier for a single day. Ladies on the wrong side of forty become so very tender !

Lord Frederick Bentinck drove me in his tilbury the two first stages on my road to Dover, and then, after a world of good advice and many questions as to where I expected to go after I was dead, he took his leave, and I continued my journey towards Paris, accompanied only by my *femme de chambre*, and my young provoking nephew, George Woodcock.

We were all three so weary when we reached Paris, that, having hired some handsome rooms in the Rue de la Paix, we kept our beds for about two days and a half. On the third day, we went out to look about us, and were much struck and pleased with the Place Vendôme, and many more places which have been sufficiently described by others ; but, what astonished me most, was seeing the public walks and gardens filled with statues which had no broken noses, and full-blown roses which nobody meddled with. "John Bull then must be a very mischievous fellow," said I to myself ; "or, what is worse, he has no respect for the fine arts."

En attendant Monsieur Meyler, my landlord was kind enough to show me a few of the Paris Lions. We went to the Palais Royale, where I saw more fine women than were to be met with in any other part of Paris. We visited the Louvre, and there I saw many fine statues ; but I have forgotten all about every one of them except the Apollo Belvidere, and that I shall remember for ever ; not for its beauty, but for the ap-

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pearance of life, fire, and animation, which never can be described nor imagined by anybody who has not seen it. The quivering lips—the throat! Surely there was life and pulsation about that statue! It is said, that a fair lady once sat by the Apollo, whom she could not warm, till she went raving mad, and in that state died. I really think that, if they had not come to divert my attention, I should have been in danger of following her example.

“We are free as air, you know, my dear,” said Meyler, on the very first night of his arrival, in Paris. “I have been most true to you for more than two years, nor am I tired of you now in the least; but, never having had an intrigue with a Frenchwoman, and being here for the first time, of course I must try them merely for fun, and to have something to talk about. You know, a young man with thirty thousand a year must try everything once in his life; but I shall love you the better afterwards.”

“A delightful plan,” said I, striving with all the power of my mind to conceal my rage and jealousy, “provided it be mutually followed up, and I can conceive nothing more agreeable than our meeting, about once a week or so, and passing a day together for the sole purpose of hearing each other’s adventures.”

“Oh nonsense! Mere threats,” said Meyler. “I don’t believe you will ever be inconstant. You are in fact too constant for Paris. One has enough of all that hum-drum stuff in England. I am sure I have had enough of it for the last two years, and begin to wish there was no such thing as constancy in the world.”

I could have almost murdered Meyler for this insulting speech; but that pride made me force myself to seem of his way of thinking.

“Where are you staying?” I inquired with affected carelessness.

“At the Hôtel de Hollande, exactly opposite your own door,” he replied.

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“Never mind,” said I, “I shall not have time to watch you.”

“What are you going to do this evening?” Meyler inquired, growing uneasy, and more in love as he began to believe in my indifference.

“Oh, I have made a charming new acquaintance already. An Italian lady who resides in this Hotel has invited me to dine with her,” said I.

“Will you present me?” Meyler inquired.

“Why no, that would be too cool a thing to do till I know her better.”

“To-morrow morning then, I suppose, you are to be found, in case I should not be otherwise engaged, at about two.”

“Why no, not so, for my carriage is ordered at ten in the morning, and I shall be out the whole of the day, with a French party, seeing sights.”

“Where shall I see you, then?” said Meyler, vexed, fidgety, and almost forgetting his project of making up to Frenchwomen, since the chief enjoyment and zest of such a pursuit was expected to arise out of my jealousy.

“Why, really, Meyler, this plan of as free as air, which you know you proposed, is so decidedly to my taste, that I cannot sufficiently express to you my obligation. I begin to wish with you, that there was no such thing as constancy in the world, particularly when I recollect how very Darby-and-Joan-like we lived together in London; but I dare say we shall meet at the Opera towards midnight, and, if we don’t, never mind, love,” said I, kissing my hand to him as I went towards the door.

“Where are you going then?” asked Meyler.

“To a party in the Hotel, to whom my Italian friend presented me yesterday. *Au revoir, mon voisin,*” said I, and then called Monsieur François, my new *laquais de place*, to conduct me where I was to pass the evening.

CHAPTER XXXIII

I HAD acted my part well, and satisfied my pride, but not my heart. No matter. It won't do to play the game of hearts in Paris, and, wherever we may be, we must take the world as we find it.

At this French party, I expected that the men would be tumbling over each other in their too great zeal to show me their national politeness. Quite the contrary, the young Frenchmen were as indifferent as even Brummell himself, to every woman turned of twenty ; but the old high-bred, high-born Frenchmen were all remarkably intelligent, polite and agreeable. There was present among the company, a French naval officer, who had passed two months of his life in London, and would insist on boring me with his bad English.

“ It may be all vare fine, fore to go to Inglat, fore vat I do know ; but, fore my part, in de short time I vas dare I had not de goot fortune to fine out de fine at all. Vare is de most fine pictures ? I ask—and dey tell me to go to Somaresetous, an to Pell Mell, vat you call. I go, an dey make me pay fore von book, vish I read. Von vare fine orishinal of dis, von fine copee of dat, an dis ting, an oter ting, and I den vos pay agen : an ven I go in, dese ting are all exécrable ! Ven at de Louvre I pay noting, to see avari ting vat is good.

“ ‘ Vot is next ? ’ I ask. ‘ De Tower day say vare fine indeed. *Oui*, certainly. I do remembare everybody do tell to me, in France, de Tower is de most fine of all de spectacle in London. But den I most

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pay for dese sight too. It is no dis vay in Paris I say ; but, *n'importe* : it is mean of de na-ti-on to make pay for everyting von can see : but never mind ; an I do pay. Vot do dey show to me fore all dis money ? . . Muskets ! I don't vont fore to see de muskets ! Vot for should any man vont fore to see great many muskets, all put straight togeter fore to do noting ? My Inglese frend tell to me afterwards dat Inglant is most célébere fore her agriculture ! I haf de great disposition fore dat science myself, I repond. Vel den de Ingleeshman tell to me, I shall gif you von lettare of introduction to de chef of de Agricultural Société, who leef near Carmarthen en Vales. Oh my goot leetil man, I say. But it is so long vay off., my frent tell to me. Never mind, I tell to him, I com to Inglant fore to see all, and I love de most of all dis science, vich is so parfait, I do know, in your contree. Vel, so I gif de lettare, an I take my place in de mail coche. Ah ! for example ! vare nice horse and travail indeet ; bote it rain all de vay, an I vos two nights on my voyage. At last, I arrive and pracent my lettare.

“ Vot you tink vos in this man's garten ?

“ Noting, I gif you my honour, boate some cabage and some myrtle, and great mosh tornep tops, and soam leettil pot of de sweet pea.

“ ‘ Vot den for Got, devil he send me here to learn agriculture ? ’ I ask.

“ An dis man say stop a minute, an aftare he take me to a société, vare von old man make vare large discours for rule of agriculture, in de velsh langage, vich vos, I vos assure, de most fine langage in de vorlt fore de expression. Ma foi ! An I am retours agen to Londres. I take my logement in your best quartare, vare, I vos tel, is all de beau monde, bote, certainement, I cannot see mush vare particulare beauté in vot ees call de *beaux jardins* of Laistare Square.”

I did not see Meyler again till the following evening at the opera, when, being both tired of shamming more indifference than we really felt, we went home together. Meyler was looking remarkably handsome

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and well. He told me that Lord Ebrington was in Paris, and had promised to present him at court the next day.

“ What do you think of his lordship ? ” I inquired.

“ He is one of the handsomest, most sensible, and distinguished looking young noblemen in Europe,” Meyler replied.

“ Very well, I am glad you like him, and I am glad he is here ; because, if you treat me too ill, or again mortify me by saying you are sick of my constancy, and wish nobody was constant in the world, *alors, vois tu, on peut se consoler.*”

“ *Point de tout,*” answered Meyler, “ for, of course, if Lord Ebrington had any fancy for you he would prove it. I am not such a vain fool as to believe any woman breathing would have me, or remain an hour with me, if she could be even tolerated by Lord Ebrington.”

“ Now Meyler, pray don’t go out of your way to provoke me. You cannot, nobody can, or ever did imagine I would stay with a man whom I disliked, merely for his money : and further, what pleasure do you find in striving to wound and humble my vanity thus, as if I was and had been constant to you from necessity alone ? ”

“ I did not say you could not get others. I know to the contrary. I only said what I firmly believe, which is that, were you, this very night, to send a note to Lord Ebrington, inviting him to your bed even, he would not come.”

Thus did this provoking creature delight in teasing me, and the next half-hour he would seem passionately devoted to me.

For the first month, Meyler went everywhere, and I led a very gay life : that is, with regard to going every night to parties, masquerades, balls, and other amusements. One day, a friend of Meyler’s, Bradshaw, told me that Meyler led a most dissipated life, and made up to at least half a dozen Frenchwomen in a week. The idea had not struck me with such

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force of truth before, and I was suddenly oppressed with very low spirits ; so writing an excuse to the party where I was expected to sup, I sat down at my window to watch the door of Meyler's hotel, which was opposite to mine, for the arrival of his well-known, little, elegant chariot. The moment it caught my eye, I despatched my servant with a note begging him to come over to me immediately. He obeyed my summons in very ill humour, declaring that I made him feel as though he had a net thrown over him, and that it was impossible to be happy without perfect liberty. This harshness to one like me, who had been hitherto so spoiled and indulged, affected me with the deepest melancholy. I felt it the more too from being in a foreign country. Meyler had wounded my pride in a way I should have resented at another moment ; but I was in Paris alone, my mother and her family not having yet joined me. Meyler was my only friend, and, but for Meyler, I might probably have been now married to Worcester, whose tender care of me and devoted attentions could scarcely be understood or described.

“Meyler,” said I, almost in tears, “I wish all the world to enjoy perfect liberty, and you must admit that, generally speaking, it has been my request that you only remain with me while my society is pleasant to you ; but this night I am unwell, and my spirits are greatly depressed by what Mr. Bradshaw has told me. You know I am not a likely person to wear the willow, or be long unhappy, if you have ceased to prefer me to all other women ; but, this night I would entreat, and consider it as a favour, if you would remain with me for an hour.”

“Can't you enter into the secret of my temper,” said this most provoking little man, in his usual impressive, slow way. “Can't you understand that, were you to make it your particular request that I should sit down on that chair, at the very moment when I was about to do so, it would be the very reason why I should determine against it ?”

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“ Common delicacy, such as is due to yourself as a gentleman,” I continued, “ might induce you not to wound my pride, or insult me by leaving me, at the moment when I have every reason to believe it is for the purpose of visiting another woman ; one too of that class, which is even unsought by any Englishman who may fall in their way. This has been told me by your friend ; but if you will give me your honour that such is not the case I will believe you.”

“ You are not my father confessor,” answered Meyler roughly, and then ran downstairs, got into his carriage, and drove off without farther ceremony.

If I had bowed in meek submission to Meyler’s will, and endured all this unfeeling, insulting treatment in humble silence, wetting my solitary pillow with my tears, perhaps some might have voted me a saint, from which opinion I take the liberty to differ. We must, as I think, treat those capricious men as we find them. Meyler’s affections were not to be so preserved, even if it had not been contrary to my nature and my spirit to submit to undeserved insult without offering *la pareille*. Had I been a wife or a mother, I might have thought differently, as it was, anger now took the place of tenderness. I dried up my tears, settled my disordered curls by the glass, and, being fixed as a rock in my determination to leave Meyler at once and immediately, I was undecided as to my choice of doing so. I wanted to convince him of my perfect contempt and indifference. I should have preferred being pointed at by the whole world, as one of the most profligate women breathing, rather than that any one should imagine me capable of wearing the willow for a mere sugar-baker, who could forsake me and openly seek the society of the lowest women, in preference to mine.

At this moment, choosing whom I might prefer myself, as an instrument to execute my proposed vengeance, was quite a secondary consideration. I thought only on the person who might be most likely to inspire Meyler with jealous rage and envy. Such

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is poor human nature ; and I have said before that I am but a mere woman, with at least as many imperfections on my head as women usually have to answer for. I allude only to handsome women, who have been as much tempted as I have.

I very soon decided upon Lord Ebrington, as being the man Meyler professed to think most desirable, and, at the same time, whose attention he conceived it would be most difficult for me to obtain, and I wrote as follows :

“ MY DEAR LORD EBRINGTON,—You and I made each other’s acquaintance when I was very young, and soon parted. By mutual consent we cut each other’s acquaintance. Yesterday I saw you looking remarkably well. You were in Meyler’s barouche. You have sense enough to love candour, and, when women mean the same thing, you have the same respect for them, whether they go a roundabout way to work, or straight forward. In a word then, I am willing to renew our acquaintance, believing it just possible, that, if you were tired of me long ago, when I was quite a different sort of person, you may like me now ; while, at the same time, I may be less afraid of you than I was formerly. *Qu’en pensez vous ?*

“ H. W.”

Answer :

“ Will ten o’clock this evening suit you ? If so, I shall have much pleasure in visiting you.

“ E.”

Revenge is sometimes sweet, even to the most forgiving lady, when the manner of it is not too desperate. Ebrington came. He was then particularly handsome and sensible, and his manners were as gentle, shy, and graceful almost as those of Lord Ponsonby himself. Few woman could have disliked a *tête-à-tête* with Lord Ebrington. The thing was scarcely possible, supposing he had been in the humour to make them

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like it. The fact is I gloried in being a match for Meyler's vile impertinence. Naturally frank, I did not conceal the real state of things from Ebrington. I paid his vanity a wretched compliment, he said ; but still he should have been proud to have accepted my invitation under any circumstances.

Ebrington was not a new lover. I had known him long before I ever saw Meyler ; but he was proud, and reserved, and shy, and he had not taken the trouble to draw me out, or discover that I professed any more quickness than girls in general. I always thought the expression of his countenance remarkably fine, and now that we conversed more freely and I had an opportunity of judging of his very agreeable qualities, from his lively pleasant conversation, it was impossible to avoid drawing comparisons by no means favourable to Meyler, who, though perfectly graceful and gentleman-like, was far from well read, and, as for conversation, he seldom spoke at all. Moreover, at this instant, I had good reason to believe the provoking little reptile was actually in the arms of some frail, very frail, French woman.

I asked Ebrington, while we were taking our chocolate the next morning, in my very gay, luxurious dressing-room, how he came to be so cold a lover at a time when I was certainly handsomer and in the very first bloom of my youth ?

"I cannot account for it," answered Ebrington ; "but, since you love candour, I will tell you that you did not then inspire me with any warmer sentiment than such general admiration as one cannot help feeling towards any fine girl. We met by accident, and soon parted I believe, without much regret on either side."

"*Quant à moi, je vous en répond, mon ami,*" said I, determined not to be behind on the score of indifference.

"Since that," continued Ebrington, "I have heard of nothing but Harriette Wilson wherever I went. I could not help wondering what Ponsonby or Worcester had discovered in you that was so very charming,

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and yet could so entirely have escaped my observation."

" You vile, impertinent monster ! " interrupted I.

" Never mind, dear Harry," continued Ebrington, " for I love you dearly now."

" And I like you twice as well as I did six or seven years ago," I retorted.

" Very complimentary to us both," said Ebrington. " In fact, you are now exactly what I always liked. Formerly, you were too shy for my taste. I would have given anything that you had sent for me merely because you fancied me. Nothing can be so gratifying and delightful to my feelings, as the idea of having inspired a fine woman with a strong, irresistible desire to make me her lover, whenever the desire is not a general one.

" I remember having once made the acquaintance of a woman who was greatly to my taste, and who, as I almost fancied, was disposed to favour me in return. After much difficulty I obtained her consent to indulge me with a private meeting, and she agreed to come into my chariot, in which I took her up at the end of a retired lane at the back of her father's house. She was a young widow. We were scarcely seated, when her very natural, frank, and flattering exclamation of ' Oh how very happy I am, to find myself at last here alone with you,' produced such a pleasant effect on me that I have never forgotten it."

Ebrington did not leave me till past two o'clock in the day, having obtained my permission to return to me early on the same evening. About half an hour after his departure Meyler entered my room, and, as was invariably the case, after he had used me harshly, was all smiles and tenderness. " My dearest Harriette," said he, " I confess Bradshaw told you the truth. I have been intriguing, since I came to Paris, with almost every Frenchwoman I could find. *Que voulez-vous?* It is the nature of the animal. I am not naturally sentimental. Frenchwomen, being a great novelty to me, inspired me for the moment ; but

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I could never visit any one of them a second time. So much the contrary, that I ran away from any one I had once visited, when I met them in the streets, with feelings of the strongest disgust. Last night has cured me of intriguing with Frenchwomen. I returned home, more in love with you, dearest Harriette, than ever. In short, I was dying to see you, to kiss you. and ask your forgiveness on my knees : but it was too late, your house was shut up, and I dared not disturb you."

" You will never disturb me again," answered I, very quietly.

" What do you mean ? "

" I have seen Lord Ebrington."

" What ! When we passed your house in my barouche."

" I am not so platonic as to have been satisfied with that. No, I sent for him : but you know, you affirmed that I might do this with safety, since you were sure he would not obey my summons. *Qu'en pensez-vous actuellement ?*"

" Pray," said Meyler, trembling from head to foot, " put me out of suspense."

" *Je ne demande pas mieux, je t'en repond,*" answered I, " only," and I looked at him as I advanced towards the door for safety, " only promise not to beat me nor break my head."

" Nonsense ! Pray, pray don't torment me."

" Why not ? You felt no remorse in vexing me, last night."

" Yes, indeed I did, after I had left you."

" And of what service was that to me, think you ? However, I never wished to deceive you nor any man. Briefly then, I beg to inform you that I sympathise with you in your love of variety, and you will, I am sure, give me credit for excellent taste, when I inform you that I have made a transfer of my affections from you to Lord Ebrington, who passed the night here, *et qui doit faire autant ce soir.*"

I expected abuse ; but, at all events, something like

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coldness of manner from Meyler. *Oh! que les hommes sont bizarres.* Quite the contrary. Meyler's spirits sunk into despondency : he actually shed tears, which, with him, was a very unusual event. He was now at my feet, the humble sighing, adoring, suppliant lover again.

" You have a good heart, Harriette," said he, " and, whatever my faults may have been, I am now sufficiently punished. My health, as you know, has been seriously affected lately. I therefore implore you to send away Lord Ebrington and give me one more trial. I will be as constant and as attentive to you as you can possibly wish."

The little interesting sugar-baker looked very pale ; but always very handsome. I say little, from the mere habit I had acquired, with more of his friends, of calling him little Meyler ; for his person was very well proportioned, and altogether of the full middle size ; but then the expression of his features possessed that soft style of beauty which would have been suitable to a woman.

To proceed, Meyler remained with me without his dinner till past eight o'clock. He would not eat, and could not leave me. At nine, I expected Lord Ebrington, who believed me watching for him with tender anxiety. By this time, fasting and fretting had made poor Meyler seriously unwell. I was not destitute of humanity towards even the worst of my fellow creatures ; but it is not, was not, and never will be in my nature to forget insult, nor to love any man, after he has practised open infidelity towards me.

" Meyler," said I to him at last, just as the clock was about to strike the hour of nine, and I was in momentary expectation of seeing Lord Ebrington enter the room, " since you have stayed here so long, and appear really annoyed, I will not turn you out of the room to admit another man."

I then hastily scribbled a few lines of apology to Lord Ebrington and handed it to my woman, requesting her to carry the letter down to the porter's lodge

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to be delivered to his lordship as soon as he should enter. Meyler was all joy and wild rapture: more in love, perhaps, even, than on the day I first went to him, after he had been pining for one whole year and a quarter. For my part, the idea that so many of the lowest women had lately been favoured with his smiles entirely prevented my sympathising in his feeling. Ebrington seemed at least to respect and love me. He was handsome, accomplished, of high birth, and not quite turned of thirty.

I was already beginning to prefer his lordship, and was it to be wondered at, all the circumstances considered? Meyler wanted me to promise never to see nor speak to Ebrington again; but, as it was contrary to my taste and principles to leave any man I had once favoured, as long as he gave me no cause to complain of him, I told Meyler he had better waive the subject, for I would positively make no promise, one way or the other. With this answer he was obliged to be content.

CHAPTER XXXIV

THE next morning Lord Ebrington called on me in his cabriolet. Meyler, who had just left me, was watching my house from his own window opposite.

Meyler was man of the world enough to subdue his feelings so far as to treat Ebrington with something like civility. Not that he feared fighting ; ridicule alone was the bugbear, which made him smother his rising anger till he had quite subdued it. My two beaux seemed bent on sitting each other out ; the difficulty was to hit upon subjects for conversation. We had gone over that lame one, the weather, at least three times, and the dirty streets of Paris, the French cookery, &c. Ebrington now tried Bonaparte, then pictures, next statues : but Meyler knew no more about them all than the man in the moon, even if he had been disposed to converse, which was seldom the case at any time. At last, luckily for me, they both recollect ed that they were invited to a large dinner with some of the French royal family, and had only just time to dress. Meyler called me aside to entreat that I would receive him after dinner. I refused. Meyler was in a passion. I declared we must part, since those Frenchwomen had for ever spoiled the pleasure I used to feel in his society.

“ Then I’ll cut the dinner, and stay here all my life,” said Meyler, quietly seating himself.

“ We shall be too late, Meyler,” called out Ebrington from the drawing-room.

Dreading some difference between these two gentlemen, I at length promised to receive Meyler in the

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evening, since that appeared to be my only chance of getting rid of him. I had this day invited a new and very pleasing female acquaintance to dine with me. She was an Italian widow, of exactly my own age, with the true, soft, Italian expression of countenance. A native of Naples, she had accompanied her son to Paris for the purpose of placing him in a celebrated college. He was a delicate, bilious-looking, interesting child of eleven years of age, with large, pensive black eyes, and thick black fringes to them. He wore, in common with all the youths of that institution, a large cocked hat, with a tight, military blue coat, faced with a lighter shade of the same colour. His appearance formed an odd contrast to that of my young nephew, George Woodcock, whom I had brought to Paris with me. George was a fair, fresh-coloured, remarkably strong, active boy, with white, thick curly hair, dressed in a light blue jacket and trousers, with a small ruff round his throat. He did not know one single word of French: nay, more, was such a complete John Bull as to declare upon his word and honour that he would take all the care he possibly could not to learn it. All he feared and dreaded was that the vile jargon should come to him by itself, in spite of all he could do to prevent it.

My Italian friend, whose Christian name was Rosabella, inhabited the same hotel with me. Her constant visitor was a most sanguine Bonapartist, who had formerly been employed by that emperor as ambassador to the court of Naples. I forget this man's name; but I remember he treated Rosabella with the affectionate kindness of a father. His manners were very refined; but so excessively formal and ceremonious that he used to put me into a fever. If he came up to a carriage during a heavy fall of rain, nothing we could say would induce him to put on his hat, and as to putting on his great coat in a room where I happened to be sitting, even at Rosabella's own house, he could not endure such an idea.

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Rosabella was naturally as frank as myself. In our second or third interview, she informed me that she had married at the age of thirteen, by her parents' commands, an old Frenchman whom she hated, and who might, in point of years, have been her grandfather; that her disgust and dislike towards her better half was at its height when she was accidentally thrown into the society of Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, who, in the course of due time—in one, two or three years, I forget which—had completely won her heart, and the result and pledge of their love was her only son, the young Carlo, who, having been presented in form to young George Woodcock, was no doubt remarkably communicative, seeing that he knew but little French, which language he spoke with a strong Italian accent, while George Woodcock vowed and declared he would sooner do anything than understand one word of their vile lingo.

Carlo was a prodigy of learning for his age. No expense, which could be imagined by fond parents as likely to forward or facilitate his studies, was spared or ever neglected. He had a private tutor kept for him at the college, and whom Rosabella would constantly invite to her table. All her hopes on earth were centred in her child, who slept on a bed of down and drank only of the most delicate wines. He was already a good poet, and rhymed in four different languages; but the poor child appeared to me to be actually dying a victim to severe study, combined with want of exercise. His mother indeed took him home every Saturday night, and he remained with her till the following Monday; but she made him draw plans by way of recreation, with his tutor, almost the whole of the day.

At the time we became acquainted, poor Carlo was afflicted with an oppression on the chest, attended with a cough, and Rosabella, having remarked the bright bloom on George's cheeks, snatched her poor little, interesting skeleton of a child to her heart, and half smothered him with the ardour of her kisses, and

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then burst into tears. I endeavoured to console her with the assurance I felt, that Carlo only required air and relaxation in order to recover his health.

"He shall have a week's holiday," said poor Rosabella, "and play with your nephew all day long, merely to try its effect."

I interpreted what she said to my nephew, who immediately seized hold of the delicate Carlo, saying, "Come along with me, little Boney. There's a castor for you," taking up the child's large cocked hat, which was full half as big as himself, and, pressing it down on his head by main force, "one may see you're a Boney in a minute. Never mind. I won't be such a coward as to leather you till you get stronger, for fear I should kill you; so come with me my little fellow, and I will teach you to swim and play at cricket."

"*Plaît-il?*" said Carlo, raising his large languid eyes to George's face from the pencil he was cutting.

"*Veux-tu jouer avec le petit Anglais, mon enfant?*" inquired Rosabella.

"*Volontiers,*" answered Carlo, throwing aside his pencil and gracefully bowing to George, as he took off the huge military cocked hat, which George had fastened tight on his head by dint of hard thumps on the top of it with his fist.

"Come along," said George, dragging Carlo forward to the spacious courtyard below.

The contrast which these two children of exactly the same age exhibited, both in their characters and persons, was too striking to have been overlooked, even by the most careless observer: for my part, it furnished me with no inconsiderable source of amusement.

Rosabella and I were quietly taking our dessert together immediately after our early dinner, when I was astonished by the re-appearance of Meyler.

"What, returned already?" I exclaimed. "Why, I scarcely imagined that you had sat down to table."

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"I shall get into a nice scrape," answered Meyler. "Only fancy me, while two of the royal family were present, jumping up actually in the middle of dinner, merely using the words, 'a pain here,' and with my hand to my head bolting out of the room?"

"What could induce you to be so very rude?" I inquired.

"Why, Lord Ebrington, who was to have dressed and met me at the door, never made his appearance at dinner; I therefore took it for granted he was coming here instead."

"You will have enough to do," said I, "if you have determined to turn spy on either of our actions, after I have told you that I never shall wish to live with you again. Now that you have thus insulted and publicly neglected me, I must choose of two things, either to hate you and be eternally in a passion with you, or to avoid your society. I know you now, and your tastes and pursuits. Still we may continue on friendly, good terms; but all illusion is destroyed."

This growing indifference on my part served to rouse the sluggish disposition of Meyler. He was all attention and, what is still more astonishing, he was now in high spirits.

Competition with a rival was what inspired him with most passion and energy, he said, and nothing on earth made him half so much in love. He loved to feel himself in a fever of doubt and agitation about a woman. It was the only thing which kept him awake, made his blood circulate, and did him good.

Rosabella took her leave soon after the return of Meyler, who was so afraid of Ebrington making his appearance, that he feigned being extremely indisposed, an excuse for inducing me to retire to rest and shut up my doors for the night. The next morning I received the following letter from my sister Fanny;

"**MY DEAR HARRIETTE,**—My journey to Paris is put off for the present, and our dear mother will arrive without me, accompanied by our brothers, George

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and Charles, with Jane, Charlotte and Rose. My spirits are not at present equal to any sort of exertion. Parker has inquired often, and kindly, after his child, and has twice been to visit me; but I will not dwell on this melancholy subject. I am writing in Parker's old bedroom. Methinks, the bed looks like a tomb. However, reflection is all nonsense. I would fain tell you something in the shape of news, but really, I scarcely ever leave the house. Brummell's sun, they say, is setting, which, you'll answer, was the story long ago; but, since that, I am told Brummell won twenty thousand pounds, that is too now gone, and he is greatly embarrassed. Poor Lord Alvanly they say is just in the same plight. Napier's passion for Julia continues to increase. I will not call it love or affection, else why does he with his twenty thousand a year suffer her to be so shockingly distressed? On the very day you left England, Julia had an execution in her house and the whole of her furniture was seized. I really thought she would have destroyed herself. I insisted on her going down to Mr. Napier at Melton by that very night's mail, to whom I wrote, earnestly entreating him to receive her with tenderness, such as the wretched state of her mind required. A man of Mr. Napier's sanguine temperament was sure to receive any fine woman with rapture, who came to him at Melton Mowbray, where petticoats are so scarce and so dirty; but, if he had really loved her, he surely would have immediately paid all her debts, which do not amount to a thousand pounds, as well as ordered her upholsterer to new-furnish her house.

"Would you believe it? Julia has returned with merely cash or credit enough to procure little elegant necessaries for Napier's dressing-room, and, for the rest, her drawing-room is covered with a piece of green baize, and, in lieu of all her beautiful little knick-knacks and elegant furniture, she has two chairs, an old second-hand sofa, and a scanty, yellow cotton curtain. Her own bed was not seized. It is now the

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only creditable piece of furniture in the house of Napier's adored mistress, one of the richest commoners in England, who is the father of her infant. I except my own room of course, which has not been disturbed. Amy thinks of going to Paris almost directly. Paget, as Lord of the Treasury, must remain in London, and only pay her flying visits. Nugent and Luttrell are also going. I suppose you know that your prime favourite, Ward, went to the continent with Ebrington, and, I understand, they go on to Italy together : that is to say, if they continue to agree. Ward has been making love to me lately. The other day, he said something to me which I fancied so truly harsh, coarse, and indelicate, that it produced a violent hysterical affection, which I found it impossible to subdue. The remarks I made were certainly, as I conceive, what every female with the least decency or delicacy must have made, *en pareil cas.*

"Ward wanted me to submit to something I conceived improper. When I refused, he said, with much fierceness of manner, such as my present weak state of nerves made me ill able to bear, 'D——d affectation.' I afterwards repeated every particular of what had occurred to Ward's friend Luttrell, who frankly answered, with his earnest serious face, 'It looks bad ! 'tis a bad story. 'Twas coarse and brutal ! There's no excuse for inhumanity of manner or expression, when applied to a woman ! ' Nugent tried to excuse him.

"'Ward,' said Nugent, 'is so clever that I respect him. He has a bad temper, I confess : but for this there would be nothing to say against him.'

"Sophia and Lord Berwick appear to go on in the old humdrum way. Nobody visits them in their opera box, except our brother John. In fact, I believe Lord Berwick will not permit them. Harry De Roos declares Sophia to be most ridiculously jealous of her sister Charlotte's beauty.

"'True,' said De Roos to me the other day, 'true, I fancy I ought to have offered my arm to her ladyship

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one night, instead of to Charlotte ; but the latter was really so much handsomer, I could not resist. The next day, I dined with Lord Berwick, and, after dinner, placed myself by the side of her sister Charlotte, with whom I took pleasure in conversing, of course, on common subjects. Your mild sister Sophia fell into a violent rage, and began to blow like a kitchen-maid. I was amused at this, and induced to increase my attention to Charlotte. At length, Sophia's blood boiled over all at once, and, bouncing towards me, she said, "Mr. De Roos, if this is the kind of conduct, you mean to observe, we had better see no more of you."

"I answered very calmly, that her ladyship was certainly at liberty to choose her own society, and requested she would permit me to ring for a hackney-coach, since my own carriage was not coming till late. Sophia's footman was a long while gone in search of the coach, during which time I commenced a dead flirtation with Charlotte on purpose to mortify her sister.'

"I must now conclude, my dear Harriette, whose happiness, I sincerely pray for. Apropos, I had almost forgotten to tell you of my new conquest of Lord Bective, who is really very humble, civil, and attentive to me. I know you will arraign my taste, when I say I rather like him : but then, you recollect, I always hated handsome men.

"God bless you. I enclose a few lines for my poor boy, George, and beg you to believe in the lasting affection of

"Your sister
"FANNY."

I had scarcely finished reading my letter when Lord Ebrington called on me.

"You have behaved very ill to me," said his lordship.

I assured him it was not my fault ; that I had frankly assured Meyler that it would no longer suit me to continue on the same terms with him in which we had formerly lived.

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"But still you admit him, just as usual," retorted Ebrington.

"Because Meyler is so violent in his temper, and, just now, so uneasy in his mind, which, added to his indifferent state of health, is more than I can resist. Meyler will not remain long in France; but, while he is here, my heart fails me when I attempt to turn him out of my house, and he must be permitted to visit me; neither will I shock nor disgust him, while he is in this constant and penitent humour, by allowing him to find you so often here."

Ebrington, being very proud, did not show half the disappointment he really felt. I refused to tell his lordship to which theatre I was going in the evening, lest his visit to our private box should annoy poor Meyler; for I still felt something like affection for him, although I could never speak to him, or think of him, without getting into a passion.

I was agreeably interrupted by a visit from my dear mother, accompanied by my eldest sister, who was, I will not say, an old maid, and yet she certainly was not a very young one. They had left my brothers and sisters at their hotel, where they had arrived from England late the night before. My poor mother looked remarkably well, and I was delighted to have her in the same country with me. She had brought George Woodcock's young sister, little Anney, with her. She was a fine healthy child, of about eight years of age. Lord Ebrington was not presented to them, and took his leave. I insisted on their bringing the whole family to dinner, which they did. In the evening, they retired early. I accompanied Meyler to a private box, which he had engaged for me, at the French Opera House, where we had scarcely been seated half an hour, when Lord Ebrington made his appearance, to the very evident annoyance of Meyler, who looked at me reproachfully, as though he imagined his lordship was there by my desire. I determined to set him right.

"Does your lordship always attend the French

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Opera?" I inquired, and I was answered in the negative, and he frankly assured me that his visit to that theatre was expressly to look for me. I asked him how he could possibly know I was there.

"I have already visited almost all the theatres tonight," answered Ebrington.

Meyler's feelings were for once stronger than even his fear of ridicule, and he bounced out of my box, banging the door loudly after him. Ebrington, instead of taking notice of this, took the opportunity of our being *tête-à-tête*, to press me eagerly to appoint a time for his seeing me again.

"How is it possible," I replied, "even if I wished it, since Meyler will not absent himself an hour from me, unless it is to accompany you somewhere? Meyler is very unhappy at your appearance in his box this evening, which was certainly rather bold of you; and, further, I am sorry, very sorry; for I know not how it is, but you certainly remind me of Lord Ponsonby, in voice in manner and in person. Notwithstanding, I positively mean to promise Meyler, this very evening, that, while he continues faithful, and so attentive to me, as he has been for the last few days, he shall not have his feelings and pride wounded by being intruded upon by you."

Lord Ebrington reddened from mortified pride, as he said, with some little affectation of indifference, while taking up his hat to depart, "*Tu fera ce que tu voudra, ma belle Harriette,*" and he bowed himself out of the box.

Little Meyler's very expressive face brightened into a glowing blush, when I made a sign to him that Ebrington was gone; for he had placed himself in an empty box on my left side, where he was watching me in a very melancholy attitude, and whence he immediately joined me.

"Lord Ebrington shall not tease you any more," said I to him. "No matter what my feelings may be, I prefer anything to giving pain to the persons who appear to feel the least regard for me. Now the high

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and mighty don, my Lord Ebrington, if he does feel for anything, or anybody, conceals it so well by dint of sheer pride, that he seems a very statue when he likes, although he certainly likes to be just the reverse of this, when one gives him due encouragement. As for you, my little honest sugar-baker, you are not ashamed of shedding tears and acknowledging yourself unhappy about a woman ; therefore I repeat you shall be annoyed no more. I felt indignant at Lord Ebrington taking the liberty of intruding himself into the private box you had hired for me, and therefore took that opportunity to give him his *congé*."

Meyler seemed very grateful and excessively delighted.

"How did Ebrington like being *congédier*?" he inquired.

"Why, to tell the truth, I don't think he will die of it," I replied.

For another fortnight, during which I had not once heard of Ebrington everything went on smoothly and charmingly. I could indeed never feel what I had felt for Meyler ; but his attentions were received with gratitude, and I fancied that, if it were possible for him to continue in good temper, I could yet make myself tolerably happy with him, as often as I could drive his late, low and bare-faced intrigues out of my head.

Ebrington, for what I knew, had again forgotten me ; therefore, why in the name of common sense should I remember one who, though handsome and talented, proved himself at all times so very heartless.

CHAPTER XXXV

ONE day as I was sitting at dinner with Rosabella, a poor Italian introduced himself to her, and had the art to impose himself upon her as a countryman of her own of very high rank, who had returned from the Spanish wars in the greatest possible distress, and had just left his lovely wife, who was of noble blood, entirely unprotected. Rosabella offered her mite at once. I wish I had followed her example ; but, instead of this, in my eagerness to contribute more substantially to his relief, I addressed a letter to Lord Fife, whom I had twice met in Paris, requesting him to take compassion on the unfortunate bearer of it, who found himself, after enduring the fatigues of a hard campaign in Spain, deserted in a foreign land, where he was likely to starve, if none of us came forward with at least so much relief as might enable him to return to Naples. The poor wretch came to me on the following morning, with a countenance which appeared the very image of despair.

“*Hélas !*” he exclaimed, “*milord Fife ne m'a rien donné.*”

I then recollect my old *beau Wellington*, who, I knew, was at that time our ambassador at Paris, although I had not yet met with him : but I did not like to intrude myself on his recollection. However, I strongly advised the poor fellow to explain the real state of his case to His Excellency, and to acquaint me with the result.

“*Hélas !*” reiterated the Italian, again returning, “*je ne suis qu'un malheureux. Milord Villainton, ne veut rien faire, pour moi, non plus.*”

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Vexed and hurt at the idea of having given the poor fellow so much useless trouble, I from my own pocket handed him a five-pound note, and promised my influence with Mr. Henry Brougham, who, with Luttrell and his brother Nugent, had just arrived in Paris. My application to that friendly, kind-hearted man was successful, and the next day I presented a second bank-note for five pounds to my poor *protégé*, who seemed absolutely overcome by excess of gratitude.

Amy, if I recollect right, came to Paris with Nugent and Luttrell: at all events if she was not actually the companion of those famous inseparables, she must have followed them immediately. I remember all three paying me a visit together, and inviting me to visit them in the Rue Mont Blanc.

"What then, do you all live together?" I inquired.

"We have each separate apartments, in the same hotel," they replied, and I agreed to call on them.

As for Meyler, he continued to be all a woman could possibly wish him, as long as there was rivalry with Lord Ebrington; but, as soon as ever his lordship had, or seemed to have, relinquished the pursuit, Meyler left off being amiable by slow degrees, till he became just what he had been before Ebrington had made an infraction in the complete harmony of our *ménage*. At that time Lord Hertford's remark occurred to me: "Better live on a bone, than with a man of uneven or bad temper."

In one of Meyler's fits of dogged humour, he asked me if I imagined he was vain enough or dupe enough to believe that I had given up such a man as Lord Ebrington for him? "You know, as well as I do," continued Meyler, "that you are only making a merit of necessity. Ebrington got tired of you!"

I bit my lips with indignation, as ladies are wont to do on these occasions; but I remained silent, considering that most dignified. At last I subdued my anger, and held out my hand to him, saying, "Come, *soyons amis*. It is a great misfortune to yourself that your

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temper is so unhappy ; and therefore I will try and forgive the torment it sometimes occasions me. In regard to what you say of my making a *pis-aller* of you, it might perhaps not be very difficult to convince you of the contrary ; however of this I do not profess to be certain. At a word then, shall I try the experiment ? ”

“ You know I shall not consent or you would not ask me,” answered Meyler.

“ Be it so then,” retorted I ; “ be it as you will, only pray, pray, a little peace if you please, and a little respite from these eternal quarrels, or part we must and part we will ! ”

Again we were friends, *pour le moment*, and again and again we quarrelled. Meyler had his fits of good and bad humour alternately. One hour this peevish, spoiled, provoking little creature would declare that we would never part, and that he had determined never to marry for my sake ; and the next, he would say that it was not in his nature to be constant. Sometimes, he would profess to feel respect and friendship alone for me ; but as to passion, or anything like love, that naturally had gone by long ago : and then he would make strong love to Rosabella.

I cannot help giving myself some little credit for the patience and command of temper with which I endured all these taunts. On another occasion he assured me, in direct contradiction to all this, that I was so profligate that he could not like or respect me ; nay more, it was out of his power to respect any woman on earth, who had shared her favours with more than one man, and that the very strong passion I had inspired him with was his only reason for staying with me.

I began to grow thin and to lose my appetite owing to the wretched life I led with Meyler, and I often asked myself why I endured it. I must have been naturally steadfast in my attachments, or possessed a very good heart. One of these, I hope, cannot admit of a doubt. At length, Meyler began to despair of

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putting me in a passion by anything he could say on the subject of Lord Ebrington having cut me dead, and of my having made a merit of returning to him, *faute de mieux*. This was what his jealous, suspicious temper made him really believe, and he never gave a woman the credit of any single good motive for what she did or said. "Perhaps," observed Meyler, in his zeal to tease and provoke, "perhaps Ebrington likes you still and wishes to visit you, while you are so excessively cold-blooded as to leave the man you like to stay with me, because I am so much richer."

"Which of us two must leave the room?" said I, taking up my bonnet and ringing my bell in a violent passion.

Meyler had never seen me so violently disturbed, and half afraid he might have gone too far, he affected to turn the whole into a mere joke, when he took leave of me, as he said, to dress for dinner.

The very instant he had turned his back I wrote a note to Lord Ebrington, declaring whether he ever wished to see me again or not, Meyler and I were now really separated: but that it would certainly make me happy, if he were disposed to convince me he was not offended by what I said to him at our last meeting, by coming to me directly.

Lord Ebrington, who lived in my neighbourhood, was at home, and immediately answered my letter in person. Though his pride had not permitted him to show any symptoms of regret when he was dismissed, yet he very willingly expressed his delight and satisfaction at being reinstated.

"Meyler has accused me of leaving you, to endure his vile temper, merely for his fortune, and that accusation has decided the business. I will therefore receive your visits just as publicly as you please and when you please, for as long as ever we shall both agree together."

Ebrington stayed so long with me, that I was obliged to offer him some of my dinner. In short, difficulties never fail to increase passion even in the

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coldest breast. Ebrington however, as a lover, was far from cold at any time ; but a man may possess very warm passions with a cold heart. Ebrington acknowledged that his heart was cold, at the same time it was on this day rather unusually warmed.

"I love heart in women," said Ebrington, "and am grateful when feeling of any kind is evinced towards me."

His lordship's extreme gentleness of disposition appeared very attractive when set in contrast with Meyler's tormenting, dogged humour. In short, ours bid fair to grow into a strong, mutual fancy, if not to real, true love, *selon les règles*.

I could not get Ebrington out of the house. He remained with me from five in the evening until past three on the following day, when, after obtaining my promise to receive him again on the same evening, he took his departure in full dress, having called on me the day before, merely with the intention to make me a flying visit on his way to a large dinner-party. Ward, who, as I have before said, had accompanied him to Paris and lodged with him at the same hotel, entered his room just as he had sat down to a second breakfast, without changing his white silk stockings, &c.

"*Dejeuner restoratif, apparemment ?*" said Ward, bowing to him, and mawkish as this may seem in print, it was certainly the most amusing attempt at wit I ever heard from that quarter : although Nugent accuses him of having uttered many more good things.

Ebrington's pretty cabriolet, which he had sent for, was scarcely driven from the door when,—enter little Mr. Dick Meyler, M.P. and sugar-baker, as pale as a ghost ! I was really shocked, having seldom seen him look so ill, and I took hold of his hand, which was as cold as death.

"Why, Meyler, will you force me from you, if you really have the smallest attachment for me ?"

"I saw Ebrington's cabriolet, and had no stomach for going out to dinner yesterday ; so down I sat at

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my window to watch for his lordship's departure. In about an hour, I saw Ebrington's head put out of your window to order his servant home. I could not endure solitude; therefore, I called on a woman in search of consolation; but she wanted me to make love to her, and I left her in disgust. I then went to Bradshaw, to whom I related everything. He appeared quite surprised at the state of agitation you had put me into, declaring that, from all he had lately observed, he should have firmly believed that I must have been glad and happy to have got rid of you on such easy terms. I was angry and disgusted with him for speaking of you in this manner, and I asked him if he did not think you had used me very ill?"

"'Why,' answered Bradshaw, 'a handsome, young fellow like you, with more than twenty thousand a year, ought not to admit that it was in the power of any woman to use him ill. How the deuce can you fret about one who thus openly leaves you to intrigue with another man, almost under your very nose?'"

"'I love her all the better for it; it was a proof of her independence, and affords me a decided proof that my money may all be d——d for anything she cares about it.'"

" You were right there," said I.

" Well," continued Meyler, "as Bradshaw's conversation afforded me no comfort, I returned home to Mr. Brown." (He alluded to an elderly gentleman, a friend and distant relation of his, whom he had invited to accompany him on the continent.) " Mr. Brown expressed himself much struck with my agitated manner and appearance, and strongly advised me to go to bed; but that was impossible. I sat at my window till past two o'clock in the morning, watching for Lord Ebrington."

" And did not you then begin to hate me?" I inquired.

Meyler shook his head, and the tears were actually gathering in his eyes.

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"What an unaccountable creature is man!" exclaimed I.

"Ultimately," continued Meyler, "I threw myself on my bed, and fell into a feverish sleep, during which I dreamed that both you and Lord Ebrington were trying to destroy me."

I now felt so tormented between pity for Meyler's unhappiness and disgust at the idea of being longer the slave of such a temper, which no kindness or attention could mend, because it was ever misinterpreted, that I heartily wished Ebrington in Italy, that Meyler might leave me without fear, to join the Leicestershire hunt, since August was fast approaching.

"Anything on earth will I do, for a quiet life," said I to Meyler. "I have suffered too much already. My nerves and health are nearly destroyed, and, if this is the perpetual tax upon a little wit or a little beauty, I would I were a homely idiot and the mistress of some clean little hut, where people would let me alone. I can do very well without love, for I can always find plenty of things to laugh at and amuse myself with, only do for heaven's sake let me alone: for nothing you can now say or do shall induce me to be tormented with your society."

"Then I will very soon take my departure for London," answered Meyler, despondingly, "for I see you are really in earnest. Only promise me that for the short time I feel under the necessity of remaining in Paris, in order to give a fair trial to my medical adviser here, of whom I think highly, not to let me see Ebrington visit you."

"Indeed, I will not," answered I, feelingly, "and I will advise him to continue his journey to Italy very shortly. We will correspond with your permission when you are in town, and yet we may meet as friends. I sincerely wish you happy; but, my dear Meyler, our feelings, tastes and characters being so very opposite, added to your extreme irritability and the very vile opinion you entertain of women, renders it morally impossible for me to enjoy a single hour's comfort,

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when you consider that you have any sort of right over me. For ever and for ever then, we are now free, mind ! and, being free, if the humour seizes us mutually at any future time, we will meet, without feeling it incumbent on us to answer a single question as to how we have been employed, or with whom we have been in love. Indeed, Meyler, you will be happier thus. Don't fret about impossibilities."

Meyler was almost convinced that his temper was too bad for my endurance, and that, in fact, it would be better for both that we separated, and that I should only receive him as a visitor. Still Ebrington affected his spirits so terribly, that I was obliged to promise that he should not for the present visit me.

"I want rest," said I, "and I cannot be teased just now. *Allez, mon ami. Amuse toi bien*, and be sure to tell me when you go to England, that we may take leave of each other."

Meyler was no doubt affected, and felt deeply at particular moments ; but he was a hard liver, and his heart was a cold one. He loved riding and good claret better than the finest woman in the world, so that, the first burst over, I have no doubt, with Bradshaw's help, with whom I knew I was no favourite, he soon learned to support the dire calamity of my loss, assisted by some gay, pretty Frenchwoman, of rather more refined manners than those of his lost Dulcineas. However that might be, he never attempted to visit me during another fortnight or more.

Being tired of the idea of a mere animal, whom I had loved for his beauty, I began to grow in love with mind. Ebrington passed the whole of his time with me ; but he never brought his cabriolet to my door, and I strictly enjoined him to watch in every direction for Meyler, before he ventured to approach my house, in order to spare that little gentleman, if possible, the disgust of seeing him enter. Much as I abhorred deception, I considered this a matter of common delicacy towards a man with whom I had

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once lived as a wife ; but, to have denied myself the society of a person so very pleasing, merely to gratify Meyler, who had so coarsely insulted my feelings, I conceived to be quite unnecessary, particularly as I often observed him go out in his barouche with a party of male friends, evidently in improved health and tolerable spirits, Meyler's spirits had never been high since I had known him, owing, probably to a decayed constitution, for even when I first saw him, strong and blooming as he seemed to the careless observer, he had symptoms of decline about him ; and one of them was that lovely transparency of skin and the occasional blue tint of his lips.

Ebrington and I were excellent companions. We both knew the world well, and well we both knew how to laugh at it. We often strolled in the Tuilleries, or down the Champs Elysées. One evening we attempted to enter the former just as the hour had passed for the admittance of strangers.

“*On n'entre pas,*” said the *garde royale*, pointing his bayonet fiercely towards the breast of his lordship, who, without advancing or retreating a single step, fixed his eyes on the man's face and said very slowly :

“*Comme il vous plaira ! Cela m'est parfaitement indifférent.*” The guard seemed astonished, and I laughed at his lordship's extreme coolness.

“I take everything in this life coolly,” answered Ebrington, “except you,” he added smiling. He then related to me the circumstance of his having one night gone, with the Hon. John William Ward, to the *Salon des Etrangers*, not knowing that an introduction was necessary, when they were refused admittance. “I, of course,” continued Ebrington, “took the thing very quietly, with my usual *cela m'est infiniment indifférent*; but Ward began to bully and make a noise, and swear at them, declaring that he did too much honour to a mere *tripod de jeu*; but, for my part, I thought him so very absurd, that I was ashamed of him : for, if such was the rule of their

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house, what were we that should require them to dispense with it ? ”

It was long since I had been fairly and truly in love. I might very likely have begun again with Lord Ebrington, but that there was a certain hauteur about his character, added to a disposition to be severe and satirical, which rendered him at some moments quite odious. *Au reste*, few men could, when he happened to be in the humour, render themselves more pleasing to a woman than Lord Ebrington. There was, indeed, much of true dignity in his carriage, manner, and general deportment. His countenance bore a strong resemblance to that of the late John Philip Kemble ; but, though I conceive no man alive could be more handsome than Kemble, yet his lordship's features were perhaps more delicately turned : in fact, they would, generally, have had more attraction in a woman's eye, from possessing somewhat more of softness.

Ebrington, in point of every exterior quality, perhaps too in many of his general habits, was a model for English noblemen. Nevertheless, though he never scolded, nor found fault with anybody, he often put me in a passion. If one kept him waiting, or refused even his most trifling request, he would not condescend to complain, and yet there was something about the freezing reserve he assumed on such occasions, which my pride and feeling could ill brook. There was no affectation in this ; but much genuine, innate pride. His lordship was a connoisseur in pictures and statues, and a most enthusiastic admirer of Napoleon, to whom he said he had some idea of paying a visit at St. Helena. In short, the only time I ever heard Ebrington speak like a man of warm feelings was one evening as we stood in the Place Vendôme canvassing the merits and the faults of Bonaparte.

Lord Ebrington having accompanied to the continent a party who were impatient to be on their road to Italy, after passing a few more weeks with me began to talk of taking his departure.

“ If we like each other again, we will renew our

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acquaintance on your return," said I, "but pray let us make no promises. I am so delighted to have obtained my liberty, that I am resolved to permit no man on earth to infringe it."

Ebrington, with his cold heart and his proud disposition, naturally loved to feel himself unshackled as well as I did, however he might regret the idea of leaving me. I think Lady Heathcote was one of the party he was to accompany to Italy. Ebrington at last took his leave of me, promising to make Paris in his way back. Our parting was affectionate: it might have been enthusiastic on my part; but that I could not help thinking Ebrington naturally selfish. Yet, since I found him an intelligent, delightful companion, I regretted him for a whole day and night.

CHAPTER XXXVI

THE next morning Meyler entered my room before I was out of bed.

“Thank God, Ebrington is off for Italy,” said he; “and, knowing you were alone, how could I resist paying you a visit?”

“I am glad to see you, poor little Meyler; but how very pale you are!”

“I have had a severe attack of liver,” answered Meyler, “which confined me six days to my bed.”

“Indeed, if I had known that, I would have gone to see you. I thought you were gone to Brussels or Versailles, when I did not see you pass in your carriage.”

“I am going to England,” said Meyler. “Paris does not agree with me, neither will I ever again attempt to live with any woman breathing. You are the first, and shall be the last. I now know myself and my temper, and feel that my only chance of enjoying health or quiet is in living alone: my nerves are so terribly irritable.”

“Believe me, Meyler,” I answered, “I would never have left you had there been the slightest hope that my society and attentions could really contribute to your comfort or happiness. I am naturally affectionate, and much the creature of habit. Even now, I would make any sacrifice for you if I could believe it would do you good.”

“I trust we shall always continue friends,” said Meyler, holding out to me his hand, which was, as I believe I have before said, without any one exception,

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the most beautiful hand I ever saw in my life. The tones of his voice, naturally melancholy, were now affectingly so. His eyes were rather sunk, and his manner and appearance touched me deeply. I burst into tears !

He asked me in astonishment what had thus affected me.

I would not tell him that I thought him dying, so I expressed my regret that he had not written to me when he was so ill. "Oh !" answered Meyler, "had we been the best friends in the world, I would not then have admitted you. I hate anybody to come near me while I suffer pain. Their pity, or their attention, only makes me worse."

"I am sure that a hot climate would be of service to you," said I.

"So I am told," replied Meyler, "but I know my own temper, and that nothing which disturbs or irritates my nerves can do me any good ; and I hate travelling, and should be out of patience fifty times a day, with the bad roads and various inconveniences one must encounter while journeying on the continent : and then, if I am not to hunt in Leicestershire, I may just as well die at once, since that is the only pursuit I have, and my stud is the only thing I am not tired of."

"Thank you," I answered.

"Oh ! perhaps, I still like you ; at all events, I like no other woman ; but, the fact is, I am naturally a much better friend to men than to women; for I believe and put faith in men, while nothing any of you can say or do ever makes me believe in your affection or sincerity."

This characteristic answer of Meyler's dried up my tears. "Why should I fret about this senseless, heartless being ?" thought I.

"You may learn to know and appreciate us better one day or other," I observed coldly.

"I shall go to England in three days," said Meyler. "May I see you constantly till I go ?"

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It was not in my power to refuse this request from one whom I fancied to be dying in the very bloom of youth ; and we passed two whole days together, without once quarrelling. Meyler's late indisposition had, in fact, left him too weak to contend, while I humoured him as though he had been a child.

We slept in separate beds, in the same room ; and, on the night previous to Meyler's departure for England, just as we were composing ourselves to rest, Lord Ebrington walked up to my bedside ! I screamed aloud. Perhaps I mistook him for a ghost, or, it might be, I dreaded the effect this *mal à propos* visit might have on poor Meyler's shattered and irritable nerves.

" Dear little Harry, have I frightened you ? " said Lord Ebrington, in speechless dismay.

I pointed with my finger towards the small French bed, where poor Meyler was still calmly sleeping, and Lord Ebrington hastily bolted from the room. I then got out of bed, and, after steadfastly examining Meyler's features to ascertain that he really slept, seized my lamp, and hastened to awaken my English maid, who slept in a closet adjoining my bedroom, which was situated next to the entrance-room.

I asked her how she came to be so forgetful as to leave the key on the outside of the ante-room.

Martha was frightened to death and begged my pardon ; hoped nothing had been stolen.

" A man has entered our bedroom," answered I, and Martha was thinking about fainting !

" Don't faint," said I, " but secure the door instead." I then crept quietly back to my bed, resolved not to tease poor Meyler by acquainting him with Lord Ebrington's unexpected return. I however wrote to his lordship early the following morning, desiring him not to make his appearance until Meyler should have left Paris.

For more than a month after Meyler's departure for Melton Mowbray, I continued in very low spirits about him. Lord Ebrington, after travelling two whole days along a flat, ugly country, was seized with

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a fit of love for me, or disgust of flat countries, I am not sure which.

“ Suppose we turn our horses’ heads towards Paris again ? ” said Lord Ebrington to Lady Heathcote, on the third morning after they had quitted that gay delightful city. Now it happened to have been long shrewdly suspected, that my Lady Heathcote could refuse Lord Ebrington nothing. However that may be, certain it is, she did not refuse to return to Paris with the rest of the party, which consisted of—I forget who.

Ebrington, on the wings of love, flew to his faithful Harriette, whom he expected no doubt to find like fair Lucretia, surrounded by her virgins, at their spinning wheels ; instead of which—but I told all this before.

I fancy his vanity was irreparably wounded with what he saw on his arrival. He had left me in tears, and returned almost under the impression that he should save me from despair. He was half in love with me for my tenderness of heart. We might have travelled to Italy altogether, and I would have rather made the tour of Italy with Ebrington, than almost anybody I knew, now that he had quarrelled with Ward, or rather cut and parted company with him. No wonder ! who could travel with Ward ? However, Meyler spoiled my preferment with Ebrington by hurting his lordship’s vanity and thus damping all his ardour.

We passed about a week together, during which time I was continually talking of poor Meyler and lamenting his precarious state of health. Ebrington took his leave of me and of Paris. Could I wonder at it ?

To drown care on this terrible occasion, I went to pay Nugent, Luttrell, and Amy a visit, all under one. There was a smart young Frenchwoman waiting in Nugent’s ante-room, and we rated him most unmercifully about her.

“ It is invariably the case,” said Luttrell with his usual earnestness.

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“Nugent ought really to hire some sort of a cheap machine in the shape of an equipage, to bring his ladies home in,” Amy observed, “for the poor things look very miserable, arriving always alone and on foot.”

“I have just hired a large light blue coach to contain six of them with ease. It is rather dirty, and one of the horses is thin and stone-blind, and the other very lame, so they go extremely well together.”

Amy, in the plenitude of her goodness, actually invited me to dine with her. She had found out an excellent black-pudding shop, in the first place; in the second, she wanted me to make her *au fait* as to what was going on in Paris, and hoped I would introduce her to some nice men, or at all events give her a place in my opera-box, when she should be too poor to hire one for herself. However that might be, I accepted her invitation, because Luttrell and Nugent were pleasant men, particularly the former, and I promised to return to them after I had taken my usual drive in the Bois de Boulogne.

“What can be the matter with you, Harriette?” Luttrell inquired, “that you are eternally driving up that long stupid Bois de Boulogne?”

“I replied that I could not live without air.”

“Mercy on me, what a tax upon life!” Luttrell said, turning up his eyes.

There were, in fact, but few things which Luttrell did not vote a tax on life, being one of the most dissatisfied men I ever knew.

We were summoned to the common drawing-room to receive the visit of my mother. She complained of inflammation in her foot. Nugent prescribed for her. I was indeed surprised at the very respectful attention he showed towards her, it was so strikingly polite. As we were not alone, she soon left us, and I insisted on her taking my carriage, which she promised to send back for me.

“I have often wondered,” said Nugent, as soon as my mother had left the room, “how it happened that

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so very large a family as yours should not only all be very handsome, but likewise so perfectly lady-like and well bred. Now it is accounted for: the secret I discovered in your mother. I have not for many years felt such perfect respect and admiration for a woman, who at least must be bordering upon fifty. Not only is she still very handsome and delicate; but there is a certain air of modest dignity in her manner, which, I believe, the greatest libertine in France could not fail to be struck with."

I was more grateful to Nugent than I can describe, for this most warm, uncalled-for, and spontaneous praise of my mother. I knew he only did her justice; but how few among the gay and the fashionable, ever think about doing justice to the excellent qualities of a woman of fifty!

"Mind you are here by six," said Amy, as I was leaving her; "because, perhaps, we shall go to the opera, if we can procure a box."

"*Vous voilà*," said I to myself, and then offered her a place in mine.

"Do be punctual," added she, "for it is not the fashion to dress unless when there is a new piece. Come as you are. That is a beautiful plume of white ostrich-feathers in your bonnet. You are always so very magnificent. Remember, black-puddings are good for nothing cold. The French consider them a very *recherché* dish I assure you, and they are much more expensive than in town."

I returned to Amy's just as her black pudding was being served up, and for once in my life I met Luttrell without Nugent.

"Nugent is not dead, I hope?" said I.

"Oh no," answered Amy, "he has just taken out one of his ladies in his large blue remise."

"Shocking work!" Luttrell observed, with just as pious a face, turned towards the ceiling as though he had not lately stepped out of window for love and regard of that fair she who set his brain a madding.

Amy was in a great hurry to go to the opera, and

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we were comfortably seated in my private box before eight o'clock, and soon visited by my late, mild, and gentle acquaintance, Lord William Russell, who really appeared very glad to meet with me. In the room downstairs we mustered a tolerably brilliant number of *beaux* about us, for Paris; but Paris was not London. Among them was Lord Fife, who came sailing towards me the moment I entered the room.

"How do you do? How do you do?" said Fife. "Very glad to see you in Paris. Who would have thought to find you here? By the bye, you sent me the greatest rogue in the world some time ago, who told me a long story about having served: all entirely humbug. I know Spain well enough, and he had never been there in his life. Could not give the least description of it."

"I am truly sorry that I threw away five pounds on him then; for I might have guessed that your kindness would not have refused to assist him if he had been deserving."

"I did not refuse," answered Fife. "You know my way, I give to everybody, good, bad, or indifferent. I gave him ten pounds, and told him he was the greatest rascal I had ever met with."

I resolved never to be duped again.

"May I presume to inquire after the *petite santé* of Miss Eliza Higgins?" I asked.

"Oh! you are always quizzing me," answered Lord Fife, without answering my question.

Just as Amy, Luttrell and myself were seated in the carriage, Nugent came puffing up to it, whispered in my ear, "Beg ten thousand pardons, Harriette; but want to oblige a lady here, and am going to call on another. You will infinitely oblige me by setting her down. I know I take a liberty; but you may take two with me some other time in return."

It was easy to guess the style of lady who would be at the opera alone, trusting to chance or Nugent for a conveyance.

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"Agreed," answered I, so that I may affect not to understand a word of French.

"Certainly," said Nugent, handing into my carriage a very gaily dressed young lady, whom I set down where he directed without exchanging a single word with her.

As one always requires a good supper after dining at Amy's expense, I accepted Luttrell's invitation to eat cold chicken and drink champagne. During our supper, Amy was entertaining us with the delightful qualities of one Mr. Grefule, a Swiss banker residing at Paris, whom I thought the most absurd, affected, mean, contemptible blockhead I had ever met with. It is true I knew but little about him and cared less, and may have been mistaken in all but his stinginess, of which I had an opportunity of judging, having heard that subject discussed by those who knew him well.

"You surely must be in love with his large property?" said I to Amy.

"In love with his property! Why is he not an Adonis?"

Amy's Adonis is a short, thick man, almost a mulatto, with little purblind eyes and straight, coarse, black hair; and his age at least five and forty.

CHAPTER XXXVII

THE next day, Henry Brougham, M.P., engaged me to dine with him at Verié's in the Palais Royal. He had invited Nugent and Luttrell to join us, but not Amy. The shrewd observations which Brougham made during dinner, on all he had heard and seen in the morning, having passed several hours of it listening to the debates, *dans la Chambre des Pairs*, not only amused, they astonished me. I never yet came in contact with such a memory as Brougham's in my life. It was not like Worcester's, gaping wide open, to receive and retain all the trash that might assail his ears. Brougham caught the substance and pith of what he heard with peculiar tact, while the prose and folly appeared to have flitted across his memory but an instant, and then passed away like chaff, leaving only real matter behind.

After dinner, we went to witness Talma's performance in one of Racine's tragedies, Brougham being a very great admirer of French dramatic poetry. Before we parted, Brougham promised to present me to a very interesting new acquaintance of his, in the shape of a very fine, noble-looking, elderly man, whose name I have forgotten. He was a peer of France, and certainly one of the best bred and most imposingly respectable men I ever had the good fortune to meet with. He did Brougham and me the honour to accompany us to the Théâtre François, and I saw him depart with feelings of real regret, being well aware that I was not likely to fall into his society again.

Brougham I saw very frequently, and I one day

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took the liberty of consulting him on the subject of my annuity from the Duke of Beaufort, which His Grace refused to pay me, owing to my having been induced to write a few lines to Lord Worcester, contrary to the letter of the bond.

Brougham said boldly, and at a public dinner-table, that it was a mean, paltry transaction, the object of the duke being fully obtained by my final separation from his son, to seize hold of such a pretext for depriving me of a bare existence. He advised me to bring the cause to trial by all means ; had no doubt of its success ; afterwards wrote to me from England to the same effect, and I showed his letter to young Montagu, who was a friend of the Duchess of Beaufort, and often on a visit to her at Badminton. This gay young man was, however, now passing a few weeks at Paris.

Before Brougham went to England he very kindly promised to give me every assistance in his power, provided I would take the advice he so strongly recommended, of proceeding against his Grace of Beaufort.

“ In the first place,” said Brougham, “ Lord Worcester could not in common decency, even supposing it were possible that he wished it—and I will not for an instant imagine that possible, or in human nature—but even if he wished to bring your letter, written under such circumstances, in evidence against you, shame must hold him back.”

Everybody agreed with Brougham. Even his friend Montagu said that, of course, Lord Worcester would not think of turning witness against me in a court of justice. That he said was quite out of the question ; but he understood that his evidence or oath would not be required to prove that I had forfeited the bond.

I asked Montagu how he could excuse his friend the Duke of Beaufort for acting so very selfish and mean a part towards me, who had trusted so entirely to his honour.

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“Why, as for the duke,” said Montagu, “he was wholly guided in this business by Lord Worcester. For my part, I do not want to enter on the subject of what you may or may not deserve from Lord Worcester; but this I will say, that be your merits or demerits what they may, I think Worcester ought not to leave you unprovided for. It was due to himself and to his high rank after what had passed, that you should not be thrown upon the wide world, and so I would tell Worcester as I tell you, were he here at this moment. In Worcester’s place I would most unquestionably have seen you provided for.”

Now it would certainly be very easy for Montagu to deny having uttered one word of the above; for I cannot prove that he did. Luttrell and Nugent were present it is true: but this discourse, having been addressed to me by Montagu, who sat next to me at a dinner, or evening-party, and in a low voice, they in all probability had something more pleasant to do than listen to us. Nevertheless, as I believe in my heart that Edward Montagu is a perfect gentleman, he will not, I imagine, be ashamed to avow anything he ever said to me on this or any other subject.

I was very sorry to lose Brougham’s society: his polite attention had flattered me greatly, and his conversation had been a source of the highest gratification to me. I disliked the idea of proceeding against the Duke of Beaufort: however, I promised to take the matter into serious consideration, and Brougham took his leave of me and of Paris nearly at the same moment.

During my stay in Paris Lord Herbert was introduced to me by Mr. Bradshaw. It was at a large party. I remember that I was very much struck with Lord Herbert’s beauty, for it was generally believed that he was married to the Duke Spinelli’s sister, whose name I have forgotten. As we had much conversation together, I asked him if this was really the case.

“No, to be sure not,” answered his lordship, to
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whom the subject appeared to be very annoying. "How can you fancy I would marry a d——d old Italian, old enough to be my mother? She answered my purpose very well while I was there, and I certainly entertained a violent passion for her. We, in fact, never met during her husband's existence, but at the risk of both our lives in the event of a discovery, which was not at all impossible. Our only place of rendezvous was the garden. The very night her husband died I made a bet that I would accomplish my wishes as usual; and I won it."

Had Lord Herbert's profligacy not been so extravagant, I should probably have fallen in love with him; but profligacy, and such profligacy, in a man, was ever disgusting to me. I allude to that bare-faced want of decency which is in so very bad taste, and more particularly when it is unaccompanied by wit or humour; for then it appears in all its native ugliness! Not that I love a saint: but rather something which is most luxuriously sly and quiet.

As I was one day taking a solitary drive up the Champ Elyseés on my road to the Bois de Boulogne, the Duke of Wellington galloped past my carriage. He did look at me; but passing so rapidly I was uncertain whether he recognised me or not. In another instant he had returned and was at the side of my carriage.

"I thought it was you," said Wellington, "and am glad to see you are looking so beautiful. I'll come and see you. How long have you been in Paris? When may I come? Where do you live? How far are you going?"

"Which of these questions do you desire to have answered first, Wellington?" I inquired.

"I want to know where you live?"

"At thirty-five Rue de la Paix."

"And may I pay you a visit?"

"When you like."

"I'll come to night at eight o'clock. Will that suit you?" I assented, and shook hands with him.

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His lordship was punctual and came to me in a very gay equipage. He was all over orders and ribbons of different colours, bows, and stars, and he looked pretty well.

"The ladies here tell me you make a bad hand at ambassadorship," said I to him.

"How so?"

"Why, the other day you wrote to ask a lady of rank if you might visit her, *à cheval*? What does that mean pray?"

"In boots, you foolish creature! What else could it mean?"

"Why the lady thought it just possible that the great Villainton, being an extraordinary man, might propose entering her drawing-room, on the outside of his charger, as being the most warrior-like mode of attacking her heart."

"You are a little fool," said Wellington, kissing me by main force.

"And then your routs are so ill conducted, the society so mixed."

"What is that to me? I don't invite the people. I suppose they ask everybody to avoid offence. Who the devil was that old woman last Friday?"

"What do you mean? I was not there. What sort of an old woman do you allude to?" I inquired, laughing.

"An old woman, with a piece of crape hanging down here," said he, pointing to his breast, "and ragged, red shoes."

"How am I to know all your ragamuffins?"

I hope my readers have now had enough of the immortal Wellington. In short, they must e'en be satisfied, whether they have or not; for they will get nothing better out of him.

Wellington was no inducement for me to prolong my stay in Paris, and as Buonaparte was now on his way from Elba, I began to prepare for my departure. The English were all hurrying away in a state of great alarm.

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My mother, having settled herself in a small house just out of Paris, expressed her determination to remain where she was; so did Amy. They were neither of them in the least alarmed. For my part, besides being very anxious to see my sister Fanny, my finances required that I should return to London.

Before I quit Paris, I must once more revert to the “*comment ça va?*” of the Prince Esterhazy, who thus addressed me in his usual coarse style at a masquerade, but without his mask.

Lord Beauchamp asked His Excellency to remain with me, while he left us to pay his respects to some old acquaintance.

In the course of our conversation, the prince let fall a remark which astonished me. He actually alluded to our former intimacy!

“What intimacy ever existed between you and me, pray, beyond that of common acquaintance?”

“*Est-il possible?* Did nothing more happen?”

“Do you doubt it still?”

“To be sure. I really thought I had been your favoured lover for some time, when I was last in England!”

“Your intrigues then are so frequent, that you forget with whom they occur it should seem?”

Esterhazy laughed with the most perfect self-complacency.

I met the Prince in the New Road, at the outskirts of London, some time afterwards. He pulled up his horse, to inquire about my health and learn where I was to be found. I gave him a very incorrect address, and his groom had on the following day failed to find me out. The prince then set off in his curricle, to search for me himself, and, having found a house in the neighbourhood where I had formerly lived, he wanted the owners to take charge of a letter for me, which was rudely refused. On the third day, the prince’s servant was again despatched on the same errand, and he was at last successful.

“I have been two whole days vainly endeavouring

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to find you out, madam," said the servant, while delivering into my hands the prince's note, which contained an earnest request for me to appoint an hour to receive his visit.

I named Sunday at two o'clock, and immediately handed over his note to Mr. Livius, the amateur play-writer, French horn-blower, lady-killer, &c. He joined with me in anxious surprise, at what this sudden *impressemement*, of a man who for years had been in the constant habit of meeting me in public, could mean.

On Sunday morning, it so happened that Livius wanted me to read my translation of Molière's play to him.

"But the German prince?" said I.

"Oh never mind a German prince! I'll wait in the parlour while you speak to him, in case he should have any secret communication to make to you."

Livius called at one o'clock, and, just as I was about to begin my play, Esterhazy drove up to my door.

Livius saw him from the window, and went down into the parlour.

The prince entered and, throwing off his large German cloak, shook hands with me.

"Prince," said I, "I know you don't come here to make love to me, which knowledge renders me the more curious to learn what you do come here for."

"Why," said the prince, "I have a high opinion of you, and always had."

I bowed.

"In short, I have great confidence in you, and think you a very clever good creature, besides that you speak and write such excellent French."

"True, prince! I remember that, presuming on this good opinion of yours, some time ago I ventured to address a letter to you in French, requesting you for old acquaintance' sake to send me a little cash, of which I stood much in need; but neither my excellent French nor all my other charming qualities to boot could excite in you the least desire to serve me."

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"Quite the contrary," said the prince, "nothing will give me greater pleasure."

"Indeed! Why they say you are at all times the most stingy rich man in Europe."

"I assure you, Harriette," answered the prince, "that you can have no conception of the vast number of letters I receive containing applications for money. It is indeed quite impossible to satisfy them all: but, as to you, as a proof of my goodwill, I bid you to accept what I happen to have about me."

He took out his pocket-book and presented me with a ten-pound note!

This Prince Esterhazy was nothing to me, and never had been, nor could be but a common acquaintance; so I thought I might just as well buy myself some little trinket with his magnificent donation as refuse to accept it.

"It is all I happen to have about me," said the prince, observing that I blushed for him, not for myself, at the insignificance of the sum; "but, rely on my future friendship. I am going to point out to you how we may serve each other very effectually. I want a friend like you. It is what I was always accustomed to have in Paris. In short, I want to make the acquaintance of some interesting young ladies. I hate those which are common or vulgar; now you could make a party here in this delightful, pretty cottage, and invite me to pay my court to any young lady of your acquaintance, perhaps your sister!"

"Do you allude to an innocent girl, prince?" said I; "and do you really imagine that, for all your fortune, paid to me twice over, I would be instrumental in the seduction of a young lady of education? And, if I would, would you not yourself scruple, as a married man, to be the cause of misery to a poor young creature?"

"There are many girls who determine on their own fall," said Esterhazy. "All I want is that, when you see them going down, you will give them a gentle

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push, thus," said he, "to accelerate their fall," making signs, with his hand, on my shoulders.

"Prince," I replied, "I will never injure a woman while I breathe, and I will assist and serve those of my own sex whenever I can, as I always have done. No innocent girl, however inclined she may be to fall, shall receive the push you suggest from me. On the contrary, I will always lend my hand, as I did to my sister Sophia, to try to prevent her from falling, or to lift her up again. If I knew a poor young creature, deserted by her friends and her seducer, and you would make a provision for her during her life, I would for her sake, not for yours, perhaps present her to you."

"Perhaps I would make a settlement on her," said Esterhazy; "but mind, she must be very young, very fair, and almost innocent."

"The only person I know who exactly answers your description, and for whom as a poor deserted orphan it would be a charity to provide, is in Paris."

"She might just as well be in the East Indies," said Esterhazy.

"Why you are like the princess in Tom Thumb! And all the while you have the enjoyment of the most beautiful wife in Europe!"

"Oh Harriette! a wife is altogether so very different from what is desirable, no sort of comparison can be made with them; but," continued His Excellency, taking up his cloak, "I cannot possibly stop now, because I must meet His Majesty at this very hour. Tell me the best time to find you and I will come often. In the meantime, pray write to me. You shall see me very soon:" and he hurried away.

In two days he came to me again, in a dirty great coat, all over wet and mud, just at my dinner-time. He placed himself before my fire so that I could not see a bit of it, with his hat on, and declared he was much disappointed at not having heard from me.

"Take your hat off, prince," said I.

"I never take it off, nor behave differently to the

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first duchess in the land! It is my way. I cannot alter it. I am too old to mend. I saw two of the most lovely sisters, walking with their mothers to-day. They would not measure round the waist more than so much"—describing to me the circumference with his hands. "I watched them home, to No.— in ——Street. Do pray contrive to get acquainted with them."

"You had better leave my house," said I, beginning to be truly disgusted at the very honourable employment which this princely representative of Imperial dignity, morality, disinterestedness, and humanity wished to force upon me.

"At all events, take off your hat, prince, and let me see the fire!"

"I tell you I will do no such thing," asseverated the prince, with the dignified positiveness of his own imperial master.

"*Ou ôtes ton chapeau, monsieur le prince, ou va-t-en au diable! comme je t'ai dis auparavant,*" said I, in a passion.

"*Je prendrai le dernier parti,*" said the prince, leaving the room.

"*Et tant mieux,*" I observed to him, as he went downstairs.

CHAPTER XXXVIII

I AM indeed most inexcusably forgetful, I should otherwise have described, in its proper time and place, that famous masquerade which was given by the members of Wattier's club, to all the nobility in England, in honour of peace between Great Britain and France, which occurred prior to my leaving England. It was the most brilliant assemblage I had ever witnessed. Amy, Fanny, and I were promised tickets from the very beginning; but poor Julia was not popular. After making vain applications to half the town, and to all the members of the club who were stewards of the feast, she at last addressed herself to Lord Hertford.

"I am not a member of Wattier's; therefore I cannot obtain a lady's ticket for you," said his lordship; "but, if you like to go in boy's clothes, I have one at your disposal; but not transferable, mind."

Julia was very shy and did not like boy's clothes; but Julia's legs were perhaps the handsomest in Europe, and then Julia knew there was no remedy: so, after accepting Lord Hertford's polite offer with many thanks, I accompanied her to Mr. Stultze, the German regimental tailor and money-lender in Clifford Street.

It was just before I left England for Paris. I cannot think why I am so very careless as not to put more order into my *Memoirs*. However, when a person gives a bad dinner, and apologises for not giving you a better, the apology is always more insufferable than the dinner.

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We asked Stultze's advice about a modest disguise for Julia, and he referred us to a book full of drawings therein exhibited, the dress of an Italian or Austrian peasant-boy and girl, I forget which; but I remember that Julia wore black satin small-clothes, plaited very full, round the waist, *à la Cossaque*, fastened tight at the knee, with a smart bow, fine, black, transparent silk stockings, black satin shoes, cut very short in the quarters, and tied with a large red rosette, a French cambric shirt, with beautifully small plaited sleeves, a bright blue, rich silk jacket without sleeves, trimmed, very thick, with curiously wrought silver bell-buttons, and a plain, round black hat, with a red silk band and bow.

I, as Julia's fair companion, was to wear a bright, red, thick silk petticoat, with a black satin jacket, the form of which was very peculiar and most advantageous to the shape. The sleeves were tight, and it came rather high upon the breast. It was very full-trimmed, with a double row of the same buttons Julia wore. My shoes were black satin, turned over with red morocco; my stockings were of fine blue silk, with small red clocks; my hat was small, round, and almost flat, the crown being merely the height of a full puffing of rich pea-green satin ribbon. The hat was covered with satin of the same colour, and placed on one side at the back of the head. The hair was to fall over the neck and face in a profusion of careless ringlets, and, inside my vest, an Indian amber-coloured hankerchief.

Stultze brought home our dresses himself in his tilbury, on the morning of the masquerade, being anxious that we should do him credit. Everything fitted us to a hair. The crowd was expected to be immense, and we were advised to get into our carriage at five in the afternoon, as, by so doing, we should stand a chance of arriving between nine and ten o'clock, at which hour the rooms were expected to be quite full.

Fanny chose the character of a country house-maid. She wore short sleeves to show her pretty arms, an Indian, glazed, open, coloured gown, neatly tucked up

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behind, a white muslin apron, coloured hankerchief, pink glazed petticoat, and smart, little, high, muslin cap.

What character in the name of wonder did Amy choose ? That of a nun, forsooth !

We were actually on our road, seated in the carriage, from the hour of five till nine. At last we arrived and were received at the first entrance-room by the Dukes of Devonshire and Leinster, dressed in light blue dominos. They were unmasked, this being the costume fixed on for all the members of Wattier's club. No one else was to be admitted but in character. The newspapers described this most brilliant fête in glowing colours long ago, and much better than I can do it ; I will therefore merely state that it exceeded all my highest flights of imagination, even when, as a child I used to picture to my fancy the luxurious palaces of the fairies described in my story-books.

One of the immense suite of rooms formed a delicious, refreshing contrast to the dazzling brilliancy of all the others. This room contained, in a profusion almost incredible, every rare exotic root and flower. It was lighted by large, ground-glass, French globe-lamps, suspended from the ceiling at equal distances. The rich draperies were of pale green satin and white silver muslin. The ottomans, which were uniformly placed, were covered with satin to correspond with the drapery, and fringed with silver. Mixing carelessly in the motley throng, I did not discover this charming spot till I had been there some time.

On our entrance, the Duke of Devonshire presented us with tickets for a raffle. "These," said His Grace bowing low, without in the least guessing who we were, "these tickets will entitle you to one chance each in the lottery, which will commence drawing at twelve o'clock."

The two best characters in my opinion, were the Honourable Douglas Kinnaird as a Yorshireman in search of a place, and Colonel Armstrong as an old, stiff, maiden-lady of high rank in the reign of Queen

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Anne. He wore no mask; but his face, though curiously patched and painted, was easily known. He sat on a bench, with his hoops and ruffles and high powdered head, his point laced lappets, &c., fanning himself, and talking to his young maids of honour, who sat, one on each side of him. Everybody who passed stopped to examine him with much doubtful curiosity, which was constantly followed by a loud laugh, and exclamations of, "It is Colonel Armstrong!" "Ha! ha! ha!" "Capital." Those who could command their countenances among the ambassadors, and men who bore high characters, for that night at least, addressed him in the most obsequious manner, with "I hope your ladyship caught no cold at Lady Betty's last night. Immense crowd! Charming evening!"

Armstrong answered all these orations, sticking close to the character and with the most dignified politeness, while the loud, vociferous roars of laughter, which were bestowed on his successful efforts to make himself so very ridiculous, never once tempted him to move a single visible muscle of his odd countenance.

One of his lace lappets came unpinned.

"I'll trouble you for a pin, my dear," said Armstrong to one of his attendant maidens.

"I have not got one," answered the fair virgin, in confusion.

She was, if I remember rightly, a young rake of fashion thus disguised.

"Oh fie, child! You ought always to have your pincushion about you. Always, always, child!" fanning himself with increased rapidity.

Douglas Kinnaird was unfeelingly severe on almost everybody in their turn. To one gay fashionable mother, whose name I have forgotten, he said, "Why Missis, you've been hawking them girls all over the world for these last six years, and sin they be made to hong upon hond like, mayhap they'd go off better all of a lump, if you was to tie um up in bunches you see, as they do cherries, look ye. I manes no offence."

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Fanny, in her housemaid's dress, and with her natural, lively humour, made an excellent companion for Kinnaird, who appeared much pleased with her and delighted to draw her out, although he had not any idea who she was. The fact is, we had determined not to unmask or make ourselves known to anybody during the whole evening.

Meyler looked very interesting and handsome, in his blue domino of rich Gros de Naples. I had given him leave to find me out if he could, and I guessed that he was busily but vainly employed in the pursuit. I waltzed and danced quadrilles with half the young ladies and gentlemen in the room.

"Is that a boy, or a girl, think you?" was the question from every mouth, as Julia and I passed them. "The leg is a boy's, the finest I ever saw," said one; "but then that foot, where shall we find a boy with such delicate feet and hands?" Still it remained a puzzle, and everybody seemed undecided as to the sex of Julia.

"Who can they be?" said Mrs. Scott Waring to Berkeley Craven.

"I want to know myself," answered he; "for I am in love with the lady's feet."

"I think they are both ladies," returned Mrs. Scott Waring.

"Pray who made that lovely shoe to fit that pretty foot so charmingly?" Berkeley Craven asked me.

I was determined not to open my lips, lest my voice should betray me to Berkeley Craven.

"We are admiring your feet and ankles," said Mrs. Scott Waring, addressing herself to me; but I was still dumb, preferring the idea of passing for a fool, to the risk of making myself known. At last, Meyler discovered my sister Fanny by her voice.

"Pray point out Harriette to me," said Meyler, "for I am tired and worn out with my fruitless search."

"That is Harriette," answered Fanny, directing his attention to a young flower-girl who, with her dis-

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guised mincing voice, kept him a quarter of an hour in suspense, before he could ascertain the joke Fanny had practised against him ; and it took him a second quarter of an hour to find Fanny again.

“ Oh you little, wicked, provoking creature ! ” exclaimed Meyler, at length, catching hold of her hand. “ I now vow and declare not to relinquish this fair hand until you conduct me to your sister.”

“ Upon my word and honour that nun is my sister,” answered Fanny, leading him towards Amy, who was standing near her in conversation with Colonel Armstrong.

“ Thank you,” said Meyler, releasing Fanny’s hand in his zeal to join the nun.

Fanny was out of sight in one instant, and, in the next, Meyler had discovered his mistake and resumed his pursuit of her.

“ Why is this unusual pressure of company ? ” I inquired of a gay captain of Italian banditti with whom I had been waltzing. It was owing to the raffle ! Having been absolutely carried along by the immense concourse of ladies, we came up close to Lord Kinnaird, who was dealing out the blanks and prizes.

“ Nay, don’t push forward so, ladies,” said his lordship, “ now, pray, really, I must beg. This is almost unladylike. Patience then ! Ladies, I cannot endure this pressure. Ladies, I must retire. Ladies, I am over-powered,” and he handed some one a small French prize ; to Fanny a pretty brooch ; to me, a blank. “ Ladies, I never knew ladies so violent and rude before.”

Poor man ! He might well complain, supposing he had been the meekest of Christians, which is not exactly the case : for never was poor knight of the ladies so hemmed in, squeezed and teased.

Lord Kinnaird is not, I have heard say, a popular man ; but as I have always seen him pleasant and gentlemanly, except when fair ladies tried to squeeze the breath out of his body, it gives me pleasure to

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assert that I cannot help thinking favourably of him, notwithstanding he admired my sister Amy infinitely more than me.

William Lamb, who is very handsome, wore a magnificent Italian dress, supported no character, and looked so stupid, I could not help fancying that Lady Caroline had insisted on his showing himself thus beautiful, to gratify her vanity: for, to do William Lamb justice, his character is in truth a manly one, and I will venture to say this said tawdry dress was never one of his own choosing.

I know not how I came to lose my party, just as the grand supper-rooms were thrown open to accommodate, as I should guess, at the least five thousand people. I was in a great fright lest I should lose my supper. The rooms were suddenly deserted. I found myself alone; but it was only for an instant. A gentleman, in a rich white satin, Spanish dress, and a very magnificent plume of white ostrich-feathers in his hat, suddenly seized me in his arms, and forcing over my chin my mask, which was fastened loosely to admit of air, pressed his lips with such ardour to mine that I was almost suffocated; and all this without unmasking, but merely by raising for an instant, the thick black crape, which fully concealed the lower part of his face. I would have screamed, but from a dread of what might follow.

“This is most unmanly conduct,” said I, as soon as I could recover my breath.

“My dear, dear, sweet, lovely Harriette,” said the mask, “I implore your forgiveness of a poor married wretch, who hates and abhors the wife whom circumstances oblige him to fear. I have been mad for you these five years. I knew you were here, and how could I fail to discover you? I shall never on earth have such another opportunity, and I had taken an oath to press my lips to yours as I have now done, before I died.”

“I believe this to be all nonsense,” answered I, “so pray tell me who you are.”

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"So far from it," answered the mask, with mysterious earnestness, "that, after what has passed, were you to discover me I would blow my brains out."

"Not surely, if I were secret as the grave itself?"

"I would not trust you! But come, I am keeping you from your supper. I accompanied my wife in the disguise of an Italian monk, and having only this instant changed it for the gay one I now wear, I will venture to hand you down to supper, and place you at the greatest distance from my own family; but I entreat one more kiss, dear Harriette, and if ever the fates make me free then you shall not doubt my affection. The feelings you have inspired in me are unaccountable, even to myself. I am in love with your character."

"Are you old?"

"Guess my age," answered the mysterious mask.

"To judge of you by the nonsense you talk, I should say twenty; but by your voice, your hands, and your person, I should say five and thirty."

"No matter which," said the mask, sighing, or making a feint to sigh. I do not pretend to say it was a true, genuine sigh! "No matter; for I shall, I fear, never enjoy your society more."

I liked his voice, and there was something romantic throughout this little adventure which pleased me. I was in high spirits, and the mask's beautiful dress was set off by a very fine person: and so, when he again insisted on more kisses, I candidly confess I never once dreamed of calling out murder.

"Come," said the mask at last, dragging me hastily towards the supper rooms, "you shall not lose your supper for such an insignificant wretch as I am: and yet, had I known you before my marriage, my dearest and most generous of all human beings, you should never have been exposed to the cold-blooded, unfeeling wretches, who have always taken such an unfair advantage of you."

"Why be a slave to any unamiable woman?" I inquired.

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"Political necessity," replied the mask, in a low whisper.

"Do you think I believe all this incredible, romantic nonsense? Why you are some strolling player perhaps!"

"No matter: for we are not likely to meet again," the mask said coldly.

"I am glad," added he, "that the little you have heard and seen of me is disagreeable to you; for, neither wife nor children nor politics should have kept me from Harriette Wilson, if it had been possible for her to have loved me only half as much as she once loved——" he paused.

"Who?"

"Ponsonby."

"Do you know Lord Ponsonby?" I inquired, with surprise.

"It is of no consequence. You are losing your supper. I will conduct you to your own party."

The mask now hurried me along so fast, that I arrived at the table panting for breath.

"Make room for your sister," whispered the mask in Fanny's ear, as soon as he approached her, and the next moment we were both seated.

"Is there nothing in the tone of my voice or in my manner which seems familiar to you?" questioned the mask, in a low voice.

"Nothing, positively."

"And my kisses? Think you that you felt them to-night for the very first time in your life?"

I started, and threw a hasty earnest glance on the person of the stranger; for there had indeed seemed magic in his kiss; and, while his lips were pressed to mine, I did think on Ponsonby, yet it was quite impossible that this should have been his lordship, who was I knew on the continent. Neither was it his voice nor his person.

"Tell me; did you several times receive money sent to you in a blank envelope by the post?"

"And was it you who——?"

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"No, not I," interrupted the mask. "A mere accident made me acquainted with the circumstance, and yet I am always near you, I watch over you like a poor wretch, as I am," said he, seizing my hand, and, pressing his lips most ardently on every part of it, he arose from the supper table and was out of sight in an instant.

Before I could recover my astonishment, a man habited as a friar came towards me, and bending his head close to my ear said, in a tremulous voice, affected by real agitation, or, if otherwise, it was excellent acting, "Farewell, daughter! Every night I shall fervently pray that you and I may love each other in a better world!" It was the stranger-mask, who again vanished from my sight never to return.

I soon forgot this odd adventure; because I was not so radically vain as to conceive it possible that I could have excited such deep interest in the breast of any individual, as could thus survive hope and feed on air! "It is a mere masquerade-trick, got up to perplex me; so I'll e'en not puzzle about it," thought I.

"Have you everything that you require, at this end of the table?" said Meyler, passing close to me, and bowing with distant respect: for the table was so excessively crowded, and there were so many more housemaids in nearly the same costume as Fanny, that he passed her without observing his late tormentor, otherwise he might have guessed that I could not be far off.

Douglas Kinnaird kept up his character the whole of the evening, and contributed much to our amusement during supper. This consisted of every rare delicacy, in and out of season. The wines were delicious, and the members of Wattier's club were as attentive to us as though they had all been valets, and bred up to their situations like George Brummell, who, by the bye, was the only exception. Instead of parading behind our chairs to inquire what we wanted, he sat teasing a lady with a wax mask, declaring that he would not leave her till he had seen her face.

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I love a masquerade ; because a female can never enjoy the same liberty anywhere else. It is delightful to me to be able to wander about in a crowd, making my observations, and conversing with whomsoever I please without being liable to be stared at or remarked upon, and to speak to whom I please, and run away from them the moment I have discovered their stupidity. Fanny was very angry with me for running away from her after supper ; but I was in my glory, and determined to enjoy myself in perfect freedom. I chatted with everybody who addressed me, just long enough to ascertain that they were uninteresting people.

At last I found myself in the still quiet room I have before described. It was entirely deserted, save by one solitary individual. He was habited in a dark brown flowing robe, which was confined round the waist by a leathern belt, and fell in ample folds to the ground. His head was uncovered, and presented a fine model for the painter's art. He was unmasked, and his bright penetrating eyes seemed earnestly fixed, I could not discover on what. "Surely he sees beyond this gay scene into some other world, which is hidden from the rest of mankind," thought I, being impressed, for the first time in my life with an idea that I was in the presence of a supernatural being. His attitude was graceful in the extreme. His whole countenance so bright, severe, and beautiful, that I should have been afraid to have loved him.

After watching his unchanged attitude for nearly ten minutes, I ventured to examine that side of the room towards which his fine head was directed ; but there was nothing visible at all likely to fix the attention of any one after the first *coup d'œil*. "Can this be a mere masquerade-attitude for effect, practised in an empty room ?" though I, being almost convinced that I had not been observed. His age might be eight and twenty, or less ; his complexion clear olive ; his forehead high ; his mouth, as I afterwards dis-

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covered, was beautifully formed, for at this moment the brightness of the eyes and their deep expression fixed the whole of my attention. "Surely that man's thoughts are occupied with intense interest, on something he sees, which is beyond our common sight or conception," said I, encouraging the mysterious turn of ideas which had obtained the mastery over my imagination: and I will speak to him. I approached slowly, and on the points of my feet. The stranger seemed not to have observed me; for he did not change his position, nor did his eyes move from their fixed and penetrating gaze on what seemed but space and air, until I came up, close to him, and addressed him thus:

"I entreat you to gratify my curiosity. Who and what are you, who appear to me a being too bright and too severe to dwell among us?"

He started violently, and reddened, while he answered rather peevishly, "You had better bestow your attention on some one more worthy of you, fair lady. I am a very stupid masquerade-companion;" and he was going away.

"Listen to me," said I, seizing one of his beautiful little hands, urged on by irresistible curiosity, "whoever you are, it is clear to me, that my intrusion bores you; but it cannot be more annoying to you than your running away will be to me. Do not torment me, to secure to yourself a moment's ease. I promise to leave you at liberty in one quarter of an hour; nor will I insist on your disclosing your name, and I promise you shall not know mine."

The stranger hesitated.

I had addressed him in French; because I wore a foreign costume, and had promised Meyler, when he presented me with a ticket, that I would remain the whole evening *incognita*.

The stranger hesitated.

"Don't you understand French?" I inquired.

"Perfectly."

"Well then, take out your watch. In one quarter

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of an hour you shall be free from all my persecution ; but, give me that time, pray do ! ”

“ Agreed,” said the stranger smiling, as he gracefully offered me his arm.

“ This,” said I, pressing the arm I had taken, “ this seems, I am sorry to say, to be mere solid flesh and blood. I had fancied—— ”

“ What ? ”

“ Why,” continued I, half ashamed of myself, “ upon my word and honour, I do confess I thought you something supernatural ! ”

The stranger’s countenance brightened, and he asked me eagerly if I had ever seen him before.

“ Never, nor am I naturally superstitious or weak.”

“ I am not much like the world, I believe,” said the stranger ; “ but I am merely one of ye.”

“ Does not that satisfy you ? ” I inquired.

“ No ; I would be more or less : anything rather than myself ; but what is all this to you ? Are you a Frenchwoman ? ”

“ No ; English.”

“ Nonsense ! ”

“ Fact, upon my word.”

“ Well then, let me hear you speak in your own language ? ”

“ Excuse me.”

“ *Allons* ! I like even an Englishwoman better than a Frenchwoman. Not, I assure you, from any national prejudice in their favour ; but, Frenchwomen are my aversion, generally speaking.”

“ No matter, I do not require you to like me, for you are too handsome to love in vain.”

“ What ! Then you really could not return my passion ? ”

“ No, upon my word ; and yet your countenance is magnificently beautiful ! ”

“ So much the better,” answered he ; “ for I am sick to death of woman’s love, particularly to-night.”

I looked at the stranger with earnest curiosity.

“ You are what most ladies would call very con-

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ceited and impertinent, but I can forgive you ; because I have not discovered any affectation in your manner, and you appear to speak as you feel, and to feel like a man whose natural superiority has made him despise and look down on the common every-day blessings of life."

"Perhaps you are right, and no doubt I have been very rude : but then you really struck me as rather a sensible girl, and, if so, you will not like me the worse for saying whatever comes into my head, just as it may occur. Why did you make believe to be English ?"

"An Englishwoman would have had too good taste not to have fallen in love with you, perhaps you mean ; but, "added I, in English, "the fact is, I am English : nevertheless, I could not love you, though you were to break your heart about it."

"Who can you be ? said the stranger, in evident surprise, "and why, if you dislike me, were you so very desirous to speak to me ?"

"Who on earth could dislike you ? Now would I forswear love, which has hitherto been my all, to follow you to banishment or to death, so that I could be considered your equal, worthy to be consulted by you as a friend ; for, though I do not know you, yet I guess that you are on earth and that there's nothing like you. I could pity you, for your fifty thousand weaknesses and errors, adore your talents, and——"

"Here is a high flight," interrupted the stranger, "I can now guess who you are ; but dare not name the person I take you to be, lest I offend. Yet," and he paused to examine my person and my feet, "yet, it is impossible it can be anybody else. Why did you affect not to know me ? Was it one of my weaknesses you wanted to humour, by appearing to guess me something out of the common way ?"

"Indeed I do not know you : and it has only this instant struck me, for the first time, that you must be Lord Byron, whom I have never seen."

"And you are Harriette Wilson."
We shook hands cordially.

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“ I know you hate me, Lord Byron,” said I.

“ On the contrary, upon my word, you inspired me with a very friendly disposition towards you at once. I was in the humour to quarrel with everybody, and yet I could not resist offering you my arm.”

“ You did not, I fear, believe in women’s friendship and affection, towards men they could not love.”

“ Why could not you love me? Mind, I only ask from curiosity.”

“ It is a foolish question.”

“ I agree with you. Love comes on, we know not why nor wherefore, for certain objects, and for others never will come.”

“ And yet, I think, I can describe why I could never entertain anything like passion for you. Your beauty is all intellectual. There is nothing voluptuous in the character of it. Added to this, I know that such a man as you are, ought not, or if he ought, he will not, make woman his first pursuit; and, to love at all, he must feel pride in the object of his affections. I might excite your passions; but then, such contempt as you have lavished on poor Lady Caroline Lamb would kill me.”

“ Is there any sort of comparison to be made between you and that mad woman?” Lord Byron asked.

“ No matter! I would never put myself in the power of a man who could speak thus of any lady whom he had once professed to love.”

“ How do you know I ever did?”

“ Those letters, in her ladyship’s novel, *Glenarvon*, are much in your own style, and rather better than she could write. Have you any objection to tell me candidly whether they are really your originals?”

“ Yes! they are. But what of that? Is it not absurd to suppose that a woman, who was not quite a fool, could believe in such ridiculous, heartless nonsense? Would not you have laughed at such poetical stuff?”

“ Certainly. Those letters would have done more to

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convince me of your perfect indifference, than even your silence and neglect. Nobody ever did or can impose upon me by a heartless love-letter. *Quand le cœur parle, adieu l'esprit.* It is, in fact, almost impossible to compose anything, which has a resemblance to strong feeling, when one is addressing a person towards whom our heart is cold."

"I am glad we agree on one point. Now, with regard to my various errors, of which you have been pleased to make mention."

"I did not do so to wound or to vex ;" interrupted I, "but you are too touchy and susceptible. I am surprised at what, when carried to excess, I conceive to be the defect of a little mind. However, much may be said in extenuation of your sensitiveness ; because you are in ill-health, and may be blue-devilled, when you see things in such a sickly light, or suspect persons of meaning to insult your feelings, when they perhaps never once thought about you in their lives."

"You use me worse than anybody, and yet, touchy as I am, I really like you, because I feel the conviction, that you would sacrifice your own interest to do me good : and, suspicious as you are pleased to describe me, I am convinced that there is nothing you could ever say or do to me, but I should take as I know it would be meant, in good part. You have perhaps the sort of plain understanding which would serve to make me better ; but you could not live with me or endure much of my society. I am, in short, determined that you shall like me all my life, and I know myself too well to believe that to be possible, were you to see me at all times."

"As you please. Remember I am always, while I live, your faithful friend, proud when you will employ me or invite me near you, yet submitting to your better judgment with philosophic cheerfulness, whenever you may desire my absence."

"I thank you very sincerely," said Lord Byron, pressing my hand with much friendly warmth.

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"You must be ill or unhappy, when you are so violent and gloomy," I continued, "and, while your genius is delighting all the world, it is hard, and deeply I lament, that you do not enjoy such calm tranquil thoughts, as I shall pray may yet be yours."

"Who shall console us for acute bodily anguish?" said Lord Byron, in a tone of wild and thrilling despondency. "But," added he hastily, "you are a dear, good-natured creature to waste the gay fleeting pleasures of this evening, in listening to the despair of a wretch like me."

I pressed his hand to my heart because being masked, I could not kiss it.

"I seldom have intruded my wretchedness on others," said Lord Byron.

"A thousand thanks, my dear Lord Byron. You do, I know, feel sure of my heart. We are all more or less subject to bodily sufferings. Thank God, they will have an end."

"And what then?" inquired his lordship.

"We will hope, at least, that bodily pain and anxiety shall cease with our lives. This, surely, is a reasonable hope. In the meantime, yours cannot be all made up of bitterness. You have enjoyed exquisite moments of triumphs, and you have written the *Corsair!*"

"True! I cannot deny that my sensations are sometimes enviable. You have already done me good, and you and I are now, I hope, sworn friends. Something has this day ruffled me beyond my stock of patience. I must leave you; but we shall meet again, and you will let me hear from you I hope. Or, do you mean to forget me? I may not long continue in the same country with you; but wherever I am, it will console me to know that I am remembered kindly by you."

"Do you wish to leave me now, then?" I asked.

"Yes."

"Thank you for being candid, and God bless you, dear Lord Byron," said I, this time raising up my mask, that I might press his hand to my lips.

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“*Amuse toi, bien, mon enfant,*” said Lord Byron, drawing away his hand from my mouth, to give me an affectionate kiss.

I saw no more of him for that evening ; but I offered up a fervent, short, ejaculatory prayer to Heaven, for this interesting young man’s better health, and then joined the noisy merry throng in the adjoining rooms.

A party of high-bred young ladies, with whom I had danced before supper, came round me, and asked me if I was too tired for a quadrille. “ But do, for heaven’s sake, take off your mask, child : it really is such affectation ! What are you afraid of ? I am sure you cannot be so very ugly as to be ashamed of your face, with those bright hazel eyes, and all that fine hair ! ”

“ Come,” said another, “ let me untie your ugly mask ; we are all so tired of looking at the nasty simpering expression of it.”

While I was defending my mask Fanny passed me, followed by Meyler, who was still tormenting her to tell him under what disguise he must look for me.

“ There,” said Fanny, “ Harriette is among those ladies. There are not more than eight or ten of them, and I declare to you that I will not point out Harriette from the rest, say or do what you will.” Meyler, in his anxiety to make us all speak to him, suffered Fanny to depart in peace. He did not once address me, but stood puzzling between a gipsy-girl and a flower-girl, till I was induced so far to take compassion on him, as to place my hand in that of the gipsy, making signs for her to tell my fortune, as though I had been representing a dumb woman.

Meyler examined my hand and nails attentively, and then called me by my name.

“ I could swear to this hand anywhere ; but how you have tormented me to-night,” said Meyler.

The novelty of my dress seemed to make the impression on Meyler, which a new woman might be expected to make on a man, who, like him, was so

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fond of variety. He was quite in raptures, and refused to leave my side an instant during the remainder of the evening, lest any famous knight-errant should carry me off in a balloon.

At eight o'clock in the morning an excellent breakfast was served. It consisted of coffee, tea and chocolate; and, when I returned home at half-past nine o'clock, I heartily wished that the whole *fête* would begin again.

CHAPTER XXXIX

VERY soon after this I left London for Paris, as I have already described, and I must now carry my readers back a few pages, to that part of my Memoirs where I have stated that my finances required my return to London.

I passed the whole of the last day with Rosabella, who was in an agony of passionate grief, when at last I, with my English maid and *femme de chambre*, was seated in the carriage. She absolutely called after the post-boys, and insisted on once more pressing me in her arms. Any one who had heard her sobs would have thought she was parting with a beloved husband for ever: and yet, when we afterwards got her adored Bonaparte into our power, Rosabella cut me dead, just as if I could possibly have helped it.

I arrived in town late in the evening, and was immediately visited by my constant swain, Lord Frederick Bentinck, whom I found at least as entertaining as usual. I visited my sister Fanny early the next morning, and presented her son and heir, George Woodcock who, strange to tell, had actually forgotten his English and answered everybody in French, to his mother's great surprise and amusement.

Amy continued with Paget, and insisted with much vulgarity on his appearing with her everywhere in public; particularly at the opera, because Mrs. Berkeley Paget frequented the theatre herself.

I forget whether the Prussian King and the Russian Emperor were in London, or only expected; but I remember well that London had never been so

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brilliantly gay in my time before, and the opera-house was perhaps never so crowded, in the memory of any person now living, as on the night that these two crowned heads, accompanied by our own beloved Sovereign, who was then Regent, appeared at this theatre. Thirty guineas were, I know, refused for a box on the upper tier.

Amy, with her usual selfishness, forced herself into my box, which was already crowded almost beyond endurance, because it exactly faced the royal one. No less than fifty people obtained permission to take a peep at the three reigning princes from my excellent position. Altogether, I had like to have been suffocated. A little before the curtain dropped, I contrived to secure a seat near the entrance to the upper room, called the round-room, which faces the Haymarket. There I waited patiently till the gay crowd should disperse, amusing myself by endeavouring to guess at the characters of those persons who were nearest me.

Lady Anne Wyndham was leaning against the crimson door in her most studied attitude : her swan's-down tippet thrown back on purpose to display her bosom, while the same set soft smile she had worn for the last twenty years played on her lips, and might have played there unobserved till doomsday, but for her faithful solitary swain, Cecisbo or lover, I know not which appellation he best deserved, my Lord Petersham, who was eagerly making his way through the crowd in his *outré costume d'Espagne*, in order to pay his respects to her ladyship. His address was most correctly elegant ; his school, Lord Chesterfield, with less of pedantry, or the late Duc de Richelieu perhaps, without his depravity.

"I am quite distressed," said his lordship, after performing his graceful bow of six years studying, "that I have been prevented joining you earlier. I am afraid you found the heat very oppressive to-night. Allow me to offer you these violets," presenting a small bouquet between his delicate finger and thumb. "They are, I know, the flowers you prefer." Lady

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Anne became broad awake, if not animated by the attention of her admirer.

I now observed a very corpulent gentleman sailing towards us. He had a lady leaning on his right arm, and two ugly, tawny daughters on his left : all three seemed ready to expire under the pressure of heat and finery.

"La ! papa, don't pull so," said the eldest daughter.

"Somebody has shoved the comb out of my head, I declare ; and I have torn my dress," said the youngest.

"Why don't William stay with the girls ?" said mamma. "I declare I am squeezed to death."

Beau Brummell, at this moment, passed immediately between Lord Petersham and this interesting family party. As the pressure prevented the possibility of advancing, the corpulent gentleman, after taking out his pocket-handkerchief and wiping his head and face, seemed about to address Beau Brummell, and I promised myself not a little amusement, from observing the very essence of vulgarity in close contact with the finest man in town.

"Warm work this, sir," said the corpulent gentleman to Brummell, who merely answered by a look of dismay, softened, however, by a glance at the muscular strength of his neighbour.

"Pray, sir," said the fat gentleman, speaking louder, "may I be bold to ask which of they two foreigners might be the Russian Emperor?"

"Sir ?" said Brummell, shrugging up his shoulders, and turning up his eyes from Lord Petersham to the ceiling in utter despondency at observing no possible means of escape. The man of real high rank and breeding might here have been easily distinguished from the mere man of impudent pretensions. Lord Petersham good-naturedly condescended to answer for the beau.

"Thank you, sir," said the fat gentleman. "I thought so ; and, do you know, I likes the look of him."

"Pa !" said the eldest daughter, anxious to be

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thought of consequence, and having actually made a slight acquaintance with Lord Alvanly by accident, "here comes our friend Lord Alvanly."

Lord Alvanly, much amused at finding the Smiths in such society, affected great cordiality, and shaking them heartily by the hand, begged to have the honour of introducing Mr. and Mrs. Smith, also the two Misses Smith, to Lord Petersham and Mr. Brummell. On hearing the name of Brummell Mr. Smith, mistaking it for some acquaintance of his own, repeated the name to himself, "Brummell! Brummell!"

"I believe, sir," addressing the beau smirkingly, "I fancy, sir, I have had the pleasure of meeting you before? I am sure I have. You are the gentleman as sung such a good song at our club."

The well-taught muscles of Lord Petersham's face were nearly giving way, not only against all superfine Chesterfieldian rules, but common civility. Even Lady Anne's placid waxen smile was almost enlarging into a laugh, at the idea of Brummell singing a good song at Smith's club; but Lord Alvanly whispered gravely in Smith's ear, that he had no doubt it was the very same person, adding that Mr. Brummell did sing a remarkably good song; but was always shy at receiving compliments, in public.

"Sir," said Smith, bowing to Brummell, "I shall be most happy to see you at my snug box at Clapham. All my family are fond of a good English song, and I will venture to say I can give you as good a bottle of port wine as any in England."

Brummell here forced his way through the crowd in a fit of desperation and disappeared.

"That's a queer chap!" said Smith, much offended; "but, good Lord, who have we got here? Crazy Jane?"

The personage who thus excited his surprise was Lady Owen, who came sailing towards them under the escort of a young barrister, whose broad unmeaning face some ladies have been pleased to call handsome. A profusion of full-grown artificial wheat was

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scattered over her head in grotesque confusion. Several dark ringlets were suffered to fall loosely over her neck and shoulders, and the rest was confined by immense red roses, indigenous, probably, to Brobdinag or Patagonia, or some other climate where everything is gigantic. She did not appear to affect youth, but voluptuousness ; rolling her eyes in affectation of libertinism, such as she had no inclination to indulge, yet seemed as anxious to excite, as if it had been her natural vocation. Indeed that was the character of her countenance, which could have expressed no other feeling even at her best beloved's funeral !

Miss Smith now addressed a young man, with stiff dark whiskers, by the appellation of brother, who, though a better grammarian, appeared to be as much more radically vulgar than his father, as he was presuming and self-sufficient.

“ Laws ! William,” said his youngest sister, “ Pa has had a nice job with us three women.”

“ We are very much obliged to you, indeed,” the eldest Miss Smith observed.

“ I told you before,” said the pompous youth, pulling up his neck-cloth without looking at his sisters, “ I have frequently informed you that brothers attending their sisters in public is not at all the correct thing, neither is this the proper spot to wait in.”

“ Don't tell me your nonsense about the proper spot,” said old Smith, “ I have almost had the breath shoved out of my body to-night.”

“ Pray William,” said his mother, “ why do you come to the Hoppera in that hodious round 'at, after giving such a price for a three-cornered one ? ”

“ If you inquire, Madam,” answered William, with grave contempt, “ you will learn that a round hat is the correct thing at this time of the year.”

Hearing the clock strike three, I immediately fancied myself half dead with fatigue, and hurried to my carriage as fast as the crowd, which still continued, would permit me.

Meyler, as I had been informed, while at Paris was

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consoling himself with a Mrs. Stonyer, as she was called, because she lived with Mr. Stonyer. However, I saw him at the Opera looking so very pale and ill that my heart relented, and I wrote to inquire after him, and the next day he called upon me. I asked him if he was much in love with his new acquaintance.

"Not at all," said Meyler; "but, Stonyer being such a fool, there was no resisting the amusement of making him a cuckold. How do you think I manage it at Melton?"

"How should I know?"

"Why we all go out hunting together and, when I have rode a few miles, I wink at the rest and fall down from my horse, or affect to hurt my ankle. I then express my vexation at being obliged to return home to nurse myself. Stonyer condoles with and offers to accompany me. I insist on his remaining to enjoy the fine sport of the day, and I go back to his mistress. However," continued Meyler, "she got jealous and fond of me latterly, which disgusted me, and I cut her. She then so far lost sight of common prudence as to send her good man Stonyer after me."

"My Mary Ann," or "my Betsy," or whatever her name was, which I have forgotten, "wishes, of all things to see you, if you please," would he say to Meyler, and when Meyler rudely refused to obey the fair lady's summons, Stonyer would remark to some of his Melton friends in a whisper, that, being a delicate subject, he could not well consult Mrs. Stonyer concerning Meyler's rudeness, in being sulky and refusing to obey her invitation: but he was himself pretty shrewd and could guess how the affair stood. He was afraid his friend Meyler had presumed to take some slight liberty with Mrs. Stonyer, which must have seriously alarmed her, and which she must have resented, perhaps so harshly as to wound Meyler's pride in a way not to be overcome.

"Stonyer," Fred Bentinck would sometimes say to me, "Stonyer is like a man in a play; a man quite

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below par. I never heard such a fool off the stage. He often calls me aside, with much mystery and, having got me into a corner, whispers in my ear that he is afraid we shall have a wet season."

Somewhere about this time John Mills of the Guards insisted on falling in love with me, merely to prove himself a fashionable man. Being a friend of Meyler's, I could not easily avoid making his acquaintance. He was rather well informed: but a stiff, bad imitator of Meyler's gentlemanly carriage and manner: a sort of man who would rather have died than not been a member of White's club, at the door of which he always wished his tilbury and neat groom to be found, between the hours of four and five. From that he went into Hyde Park, for such was the fashion, and he had a chance of meeting Brummell and Meyler there. The former was just now getting into disgrace. The story was this.

Brummell, Alvanly, and Worcester agreed to raise thirty thousand pounds on their joint securities. Brummell, having made Worcester believe that he was at least competent to pay the interest of the debt, the money was raised, and the weight of the debt was expected to fall on the Duke of Beaufort, who, after strict inquiry, ascertained that Brummell was deeply involved and without even the most remote prospect of ever possessing a single guinea. When Meyler heard this he became furious, both on his friend Worcester's account and his own, declaring that Brummell had borrowed seven thousand pounds from him, which he had lent in the fullest conviction that Brummell was a man of honour.

I asked Meyler how he could be so very stupid as to have been deceived, even for an instant, about Brummell.

"Why, did not everybody think so?"

"Certainly not. Brummell was pretty generally known for a man destitute of feeling or principle; but he looked well at an assembly, and was the fashion."

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"I would forgive him the seven thousand pounds he has robbed me of ; but, on Worcester's account, I shall expose him to-morrow at White's."

"Why not let Worcester fight his own battles ?"

"That is just what, for the Duchess of Beaufort's sake, I wish to prevent."

"I think you may trust Worcester, who has no sort of inclination to fight Brummell nor anybody else."

"No matter. Brummell I will certainly expose ; because he has basely obtained a sum of money from my friend."

"So has Lord Alvanly."

"But then, Lord Alvanly may at least contrive to pay the interest ; therefore it was not so complete a fraud. Nevertheless, I hold it my duty, as an independent gentleman, never to give my countenance nor society to a man who has done a dishonourable action. I shall therefore cut Lord Alvanly wherever I meet him, notwithstanding no man delights more in his amusing qualities than I do ; but, believing that society would be much improved by general firmness of this kind, no power on earth should prevail on me to swerve from this my fixed determination."

Meyler strictly adhered to this resolution to the day of his death. Even when he met Lord Alvanly in the Duchess of Beaufort's box, or no matter where, he never spoke to him again. Alvanly used to rail at Meyler for this, as might naturally be expected, calling him a d——d methodistical grocer, &c.

The little sugar-baker kept his promise of exposing Mr. Brummell at White's Club, where he placed himself the following morning for the sole purpose of saying to every man who entered, that Mr. Brummell's late conduct both towards the Marquis of Worcester and himself, had been such as rendered him a disgrace to society, and most unfit to remain a member of that club. Tom Raikes, I believe it was, who acquainted Brummell the next day of this glowing panegyric on his character.

Brummell addressed a few lines to Meyler, begging

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to be informed if such had really and truly been the expressions made use of.

Meyler answered that not only he had used expressions, but that he further proposed returning to the club on the following day, for the sole purpose of repeating them between the hours of two and four, to anybody who might happen to be present, and, if Mr. Brummell had anything to say to him in return, he would be sure to find him at White's during that particular time.

Brummell never made his appearance in London after the receipt of this letter, which gained Meyler the nickname of the dandy-killer. Since then, dandies have gone out of fashion.

Brummell, finding himself on his last legs, made the best of his way to about a dozen of his former acquaintances, from most of whom he had already contrived to obtain large sums of money.

"Play has been the ruin of me," said he to each of them in turn. "I now throw myself on your compassion, being in a wretched plight; for I have been led into such scrapes, as oblige me to leave London at a minute's notice, and I have not a guinea to pay post horses."

Many of them gave him a fifty-pound note; so did John Mills I believe; but first, he expostulated with the beau, and asked him what excuse he could offer for having already obtained such large sums from one who knew so little of him.

"Why," said Brummell to several of these half-and-half sort of gentry, "have not I called you Dick, Tom, and John, you rogues? And was not that worth all the money to you? But for this, do you fancy or flatter yourselves that you would ever have been seen picking your teeth in Lady Foley's box, or the Duchess of Rutland's? John Mills above all!"

Brummell was soon after this established in Calais, and half the world went to see him, as though he had been a lion. I determined to do so too on my return

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to Paris, where I promised to join my mother as soon as I had settled the business which had brought me to England. In the interval, I passed much of my time with Fanny, who now saw a good deal of Lord Bective. Her health continued much as usual.

Lord Byron paid me frequent visits ; but I really cannot recollect whether it was just at this period or later in that year or the next. No matter, Voltaire says somewhere, that provided there was a battle, it does not signify when it took place. His lordship's manner was always natural, sometimes very pleasant ; but generally egotistical. He would listen to one's conversation just as long as he was entertained by it and no longer. However, he very good-naturedly permitted one to grow tired of him in the like manner, which was more than many great men could pardon. Once he talked with me on religion till I grew weary and absent. He then fixed his expressive eyes keenly on my face for an instant, as if to read my thoughts before he ventured to proceed, and complacently changed the subject, observing, "I have tired you to death on religion. Let us talk of the gay world, men and women ! Perhaps you may find me less tiresome."

" You are never tiresome on any subject ; but I was vexed, and tired of the vain attempts I have been making to change such opinions, as seem to engender black melancholy, in the mind of a man superior and amiable, as you would be with a happier temper. It was indeed the very height of vanity and folly in me, to have hoped for an instant, that anything I could say would influence you."

" The strong proof that you have affected me by much which you have been saying, is the energy and nerve with which I have been striving to refute your arguments during the last half-hour. Do you believe I should have taken all this trouble, if you had said nothing to strike me or throw new lights on a subject which is often tormenting me ?"

" Why not make up our minds that we know

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nothing, and then, while we quietly follow the dictates of our own consciences, hope the best?"

"Very comfortable doctrine, certainly," said Lord Byron: "but, if thoughts and wishes, boundless as the heavens, will force themselves on a soaring inquisitive mind almost to madness, while shame for its own littleness, and dread of a future which cannot be understood or avoided, contribute to disgust me with my present state, and make me the wretch of impulse which you and all must hate——?"

Lord Byron uttered these words in such a tremendous, loud voice, that his strength and feelings were suddenly exhausted, and his countenance changed to the ashy paleness of death as he threw his head against the back of the sofa whereon he was sitting. Common-place words of sympathy and condolence I conceived must be thrown away on any person, at a moment when the feelings were so highly wrought. I therefore silently placing myself by his side imprinted a kiss on his hand. He was in the act of withdrawing it almost furiously; but I fixed my eyes upon his face, and their expression must have pleased him; for he immediately replaced his hand in mine, which he pressed very affectionately. I reclined my head on his shoulder, in order to talk to him with less formality.

"It is the over-excitement of a too active mind which operates thus upon our nerves," said I, trying to identify myself with his mental sufferings. "It would surely soothe us, could we in such moments recline on the fresh grass by the side of a clear brook, and amuse ourselves in luxurious indolence watching the pebbles, as we threw them into the water, until the monotony of this lazy occupation should put us to sleep, when we might happen to dream of infinite space, and freedom, and joy, with no sad void left aching in the breast."

Lord Byron smiled on me with the earnest warmth which a parent would show towards a child, in reward for its attempts to please and amuse him.

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“One day or other such a dream as this shall be eternal ;” I continued, and, without giving him time to argue on the subject I drew his attention, as if by accident, to some of the most striking and animated beauties of his *Corsair*, just as they had really impressed me. Where is the author who can be indifferent to the genuine unhackneyed praise bestowed on his own composition ?

Lord Byron gradually recovered his serenity, and, before we separated, we had mutually indulged in many a hearty laugh at the expense of false prudes : ladies who put their heads into their pillows, while affecting to cry nay, and, at the same time, *elles se prêtent à la circonstance*. But never mind what we laughed at, or how absurd our conversation, so that poor dear Lord Byron got rid of his sombre melancholy.

We met on various occasions previously to his separation from his wife ; and his lordship made me very happy one day, by assuring me that there was a soothing kind of softness in my temper and disposition, which, joined to much playful humour, had more than once saved him from feelings nearly allied to madness.

Speaking one day of the severe critique published by the Edinburgh reviewers on his first work, entitled *Hours of Idleness*, I mentioned my surprise at his lordship having been so irritated and annoyed by it.

“I can easily conceive a stupid, prosing poet, who felt his own inferiority and despaired of writing anything better, becoming furious at such absurd scurility ; but I should have expected you to have read it without feeling your temper ruffled ; though, in fact, your poetry was perhaps a little lame : but the satire directed against it became pointless, from its unnatural severity.”

“And where did you ever see a stupid, prosing poet, who did feel his own inferiority ?” asked Lord Byron. “As a boy, I certainly had a strong suspicion that I possessed unusual abilities ; but I was by no

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means convinced of it : and I often felt myself very deficient in things which it was incumbent on any man to know. I offered my work to the public in fear and trembling ; for I knew but very little of the world, and was foolishly sensitive."

Speaking of vanity some time afterwards, Lord Byron remarked, laughingly, that he was tired of praise as Lord Byron, because it now became a thing of course ; but still he felt at all times proud and grateful, when any stranger took him for a very fine fellow.

" I, one day," he continued, " determined to try what effect I could produce on an untaught servant-maid. She was very pretty and not, I think, deficient in natural abilities, though it is really very good of me to say so ; for she could not endure me ! I made myself very smart too at our second meeting, and she became a little more reconciled to me before I left England. However, she certainly was much more in love with a young shop-keeper in the neighbourhood. You made my vanity ample amends : for I am too proud of your spontaneous good opinion, to suffer myself to doubt the truth of your former assurance, upon your word and honour, that you did not know me when you addressed me at the masquerade."

CHAPTER XL

LORD EBRINGTON came to see me in town on his return from Italy, and declared me so delightful that I reminded him of *les beaux vieux temps passés*. I nevertheless went back to Paris, without doing anything with the Duke of Beaufort respecting my annuity.

I cannot help thinking that many persons are governed rather by worldly than by moral principles, in their determination to praise everybody they know without rhyme or reason: for I have been acquainted with many, to whom mild Christian charity was a stranger, who courted popularity by indiscriminate praise of the good and of the bad. Coldness of heart renders all this easy and natural.

The good-natured man, says some great writer or other, is generally without benevolence or any other virtue, than such as indolence and insensibility confer. Now, the selfsame energy and warmth of heart, which creates enthusiastic admiration of the virtuous and amiable, excites the strongest feelings of resentment against those who are capable of meanness or dishonour.

Few were, I believe, unacquainted with the real character of Beau Brummell, among those who courted, praised, sought and copied him. The prudence of such conduct can no more be doubted, in my humble opinion, than its injustice towards the truly amiable. Although for my part I never affected friendship for Mr. Brummell, either in his day of triumph or since his disgrace, yet curiosity

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induced me to inquire about him as I passed through Calais.

“*C’était un homme charmant*” his French language-master informed me. “*Qu’il avait un ton parfait ; que c’était aussi étonnant, qu’heureux qu’il n’eut jamais appris à parler Français, en Angleterre.*”

I made the beau a hasty visit, just as the horses were being put to my carriage. My inquiry, “*Si Monsieur Brummell était visible ?*” was answered by his valet, just such a valet as one would have given the beau in the acme of his glory, *bien poudré, bien cérémonieu, et bien mis, que Monsieur faisait sa barbe.*

“*Pardon,*” added the valet, seeing me about to leave my card, “*mais Monsieur reçoit, en faisant la barbe toujours. Monsieur est à sa seconde toilette, actuellement.*”

I found the beau *en robe de chambre de Florence*, and, if one might judge from his increased embonpoint and freshness, his disgrace had not seriously affected him. He touched lightly on this subject in the course of our conversation, *faisant toujours la barbe, avec une grace toute particulière, et le moindre petit rasoir, que je n’eus jamais vu.*

“Play,” he said, “had been the ruin of them all.”

“Whom do you include in your all ?”

He told me there had been a rot in White’s club.

“I have heard all about your late tricks in London,” said I.

Brummell laughed, and told me that in Calais he sought only French society ; because it was his decided opinion that nothing could be more ridiculous than the idea of a man going to the continent, whether from necessity or choice, merely to associate with Englishmen.

I asked him if he did not find Calais a very melancholy residence.

“No,” answered Brummell, “not at all. I draw, read, study French, and——”

“Play with that dirty French dog,” interrupted I.

“*Finissez donc, Louis,*” said he laughing, and encouraging the animal to play tricks, leap on his *robe*

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de chambre de Florence, and make a noise. Then, turning to me, “There are some pretty French actresses at Paris. I had such a sweet green shoe here just now. In short,” added Brummell, “I have never been in any place in my life, where I could not amuse myself.”

Brummell’s table was covered with seals, chains, snuff-boxes and watches: presents, as he said, from Lady Jersey and various other ladies of high rank.

The only talent I could ever discover in this beau was that of having well-fashioned the character of a gentleman, and proved himself a tolerably good actor; yet, to a nice observer, a certain impenetrable, unnatural stiffness of manner proved him but nature’s journeyman after all; but then his wig—his new French wig was nature itself.

From what I had heard of the hero’s fall, I fully expected to have found him reclined on a couch worn down to a skeleton, and with these lines of the poor Cardinal Wolsey, or the like of them, ever and anon in his mouth:

Go get thee from me !
I am poor fallen man.
No sun shall ever usher forth mine honours,
Or gild again the noble hoofs that waited
Upon my smiles.

Quite the contrary however was Brummell, who, had he not covered his bald pate with the said model of a wig, would have looked just as usual.

At Paris, I found most of my friends just as I had left them. Rosabella was delighted to see me. Nugent’s old blue remise was still kept in constant motion, rattling about the dirty streets of Paris after his favourite women, and Amy’s eyes still rolled and ogled her ugly Swiss banker, Monsieur Grefule, who, being still cruel, my pen was employed to melt his Swiss heart; but one might as well have attempted to thaw a Swiss mountain-cape of ice.

I think it was during this visit of mine to Paris,

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that I happened to be in want of money, an exigency by no means unusual with me ; and, having considered who was most likely to give it me, after vainly applying to Argyle I fixed on Lord Byron, who was at that time in Italy : and I addressed him as follows :

“ Paris, 15th. March.

“ MY DEAR LORD BYRON,—I hate to ask you for money, because you ought not to pay anybody : not even turnpike men, postmen nor tax-gathering men : for we are all paid ten-fold by your delicious verses, even if we had claims on you, and I have none. However, I only require a little present aid, and that I am sure you will not refuse me, as you once refused to make my acquaintance because you held me too cheap. At the same time, pray write me word that you are tolerably happy. I hope you believe in the very strong interest I take, and always shall take, in your welfare : so I need not prose about it. God bless you, my dear Lord Byron.

“ H. W.”

By return of post, I received the following answer :

“ Ravenna, March 30th.

“ I have just received your letter, dated 15th instant, and will send you fifty pounds, if you will inform me how I can remit that sum ; for I have no correspondence with Paris of any kind ; my letters of credit being for Italy ; but perhaps you can get some one to cash you a bill for fifty pounds on me, which I would honour, or you can give me a safe direction for the remission of a bill to that amount. Address to me at Ravenna, not Venice.

“ With regard to my refusal, some years ago, to comply with a very different request of yours, you mistook, or chose to mistake the motive : it was not that ‘ I held you much too cheap ’ as you say, but that my compliance with your request to visit you, would just then have been a great wrong to another person :

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and, whatever you may have heard, or may believe, I have ever acted with good faith in things even where it is rarely observed, as long as good faith is kept with me. I told you afterwards that I had no wish to hurt your self-love, and I tell you so again, when you will be more disposed to believe me.

“ In answer to your wish that I shall tell you if I was ‘ happy,’ perhaps it would be a folly in any human being to say so of themselves, particularly a man who has had to pass through the sort of things which I have encountered ; but I can at least say that I am not miserable, and am perhaps more tranquil than ever I was in England.

“ You can answer as soon as you please : and believe me

“ Yours, &c.

“ BYRON.

“ P.S. Send me a banker’s or merchant’s address, or any person’s in your confidence, and I will get Langle, my banker at Bologna, to remit you the sum I have mentioned.

“ It is not a very magnificent one ; but it is all I can spare just now.”

Answer :

“ Paris, 30 Rue de la Paix.

“ Ten thousand thanks, dear Lord Byron, for your prompt compliance with my request. You had better send the money to me here and I shall get it safe. I am very glad to learn that you are more tranquil. For my part, I never aspired to being your companion, and should be quite enough puffed up with pride, were I permitted to be your housekeeper, attend to your morning cup of chocolate, damn your night-cap, comb your dog, and see that your linen and beds are well aired, and, supposing all these things were duly and properly attended to, perhaps you might, one day or other in the course of a season, desire me to put on my clean bib and apron and seat myself by

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your side, while you condescended to read me in your beautiful voice your last new poem !

“ Apropos ! I travelled with a man lately who had just left you. I forget his name ; a sort of a lawyer as I guessed, because he would talk about the ‘ parties ’ every few minutes. No ! he could not be quite so bad as that neither. I don’t know what he was ; but he had not the least mite of skin on his long, thin, straight nose. That had been all entirely burnt off, he said, while he was enjoying the charms of your delightful society at Venice. Heaven defend me from such a nose, however poetically bestowed upon me ! Don Juan kept me up the whole of last night. I will not attempt to describe its beauties, as they struck and delighted me ; because that would be at the expense of another night’s rest : and, what can I say to you, who know well that you are the first poet of this, I am inclined to think of any, age ? And, being this, as well as young and beautiful, why condescend to resent our sins against you ? A common man might as well be angry with a wasp, as Lord Byron with a common man, when he is waspish towards him, and let me ask you, what harm the commandments ever did you or those who believe in them since they teach nought but virtue. And what catchpenny ballad writer could not write a parody on them as you have done ? *Souviens toi, comme tu es noble, et ne te mêle point de tout cela.* Let our religion alone, till you can furnish us with a more perfect creed. Till then, neither you nor Voltaire will ever enlighten the world by laughing at it.

“ It would serve me right, were you to refuse to send me what you promised after my presumption in writing you this sermon. However, I must be frank and take my chance, and, if you really wish to convince me you bear no malice nor hatred in your heart, tell me something about yourself ; and do pray try and write a little better, for I never saw such a vile hand as yours has become. Was it never a little more decent ? True, a great man is permitted to write

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worse than ordinary people ; *mais votre écriture passe la permission.* Any one, casting a hasty glance at one of your effusions, would mistake it for a washer-woman's laboured scrawl, or a long dirty ditty from some poor soul just married, who humbly begs the favour of a little mangling from the neighbouring nobility, gentry, and others ! Look to it, man ! Are there no writing-masters at Ravenna ? Cannot you write straight at least ? Dean Swift would have taken you 'for a lady of England !'

"God bless you, you beautiful, little, ill-tempered, delightful creature, and make you as happy as I wish you to be.

"HARRIETTE.

"Can I forward you a bundle of pens, or anything ?"

Answer :

"Ravenna, May 15th.

"I enclose a bill for a thousand francs, a good deal short of fifty pounds ; but I will remit the rest by the very first opportunity. Owing to the little correspondence between Langle, the Bologna banker, I have had more difficulty in arranging the remittance of this paltry sum, than if it had been as many hundreds, to be paid on the spot. Excuse all this, also the badness of my hand-writing, which you find fault with and which was once better ; but, like everything else, it has suffered from late hours and irregular habits.

"The Italian pens, ink and paper are also two centuries behind the like articles in other countries.

"Yours very truly and affectionately,

"BYRON.

"I should have written more at length, in reply to some parts of your letter ; but I am at 'this present writing' in a scrape (not a pecuniary one, but personal, about one of your ambrosial sex), which may probably end this very evening seriously. Don't be frightened. The Italians don't fight : they stab a little now and

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then ; but it is not that, it is a divorce and separation ; and, as the aggrieved person is a rich noble and old, and has had a fit of discovery against his moiety, who is only twenty years old, matters look menacing.

“ I must also get on horse-back this minute, as I keep a friend waiting.

“ Address to me at Ravenna as usual.”

Lord Byron wrote me many letters at different times ; but I have lost or mislaid them all, except those which I have herein given, and can show to any one, who may be pleased to question their being really originals.

Here's a disaster—a multiplicity of disasters in short, as Lady Berwick said one day, when the compound evils fell upon her. First, Peacock did not send her shoes home. Secondly, Lord Berwick threw a large, hot leg of mutton at his well-powdered footman's head. I will tell you why : the stupid cook insisted on serving it up, unadorned by the smart piece of writing-paper which is usually wrapped round the shank-bone. His lordship had expostulated so often that, this time, he hoped to imprint the fact more strongly on the memory by dousing the untouched, greasy joint against his lacquey's brain. Now Sophia, it so chanced, was fond of a slice of mutton. Thirdly, that little man in St. James' Street, who sells box-combs, I forget his name, cut her hair at least an inch too short on the forehead. Fourthly, Sophia could not match the silk she wanted to finish a purse she happened to be netting for her handsome harp-master, Boscha of —— notoriety.

“ One thing coming upon another,” said Sophia, turning up her eyes as she sat with her feet on the fender ; “ one thing coming upon another, I feel I shall go mad.” But, heavy as were her ladyship's afflictions, they cannot reasonably be named in the same day with the tragic misadventures which have been lately heaped on my poor little devoted shoulders.

I had proceeded nearly thus far with these my most

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valuable *Memoirs*, and nearly thus much had been kindly forwarded by the late, good-natured, obliging ambassador, Sir Charles Stuart.

Hélas ! les voilà passés, ces jours de fêtes ! Sir Charles is sent to India, and his place supplied by that self-same beau, whom I one Sunday trotted up to Marylebone Fields in the dog-days, and did not order him home again till he was expiring with fatigue and perspiration. It just now occurs to me that I styled him Lord George, instead of Lord Granville Leveson Gower, an error which I hasten to correct and in all humility atone for : but it really is difficult to bear in mind the names of those who do not excite in us the least interest. Now that the case is altered, my readers perceive how readily I correct myself, having addressed his lordship to this effect :

“ My acquaintance with your lordship is very slight, since we have met but once in our lives, and that was a long while ago. Nevertheless, I hope you will prevent my feeling the loss of my late kind friend, whom everybody likes, as far as permitting me to forward my letters in the bag.

“ You will thus, my lord, serve me just now most positively and effectually, for which condescending kindness I shall ever remain your lordship’s obliged and most obedient servant,

“ H. WILSON.”

Lord Granville sent me a stiff formal note, which I have neither time nor inclination to look for, stating his regrets that, owing to certain regulations at the Foreign Office, he was compelled to refuse my request.

To which I replied :

“ MY LORD,—I was looking about for a fool to fill up my book, and you are just arrived in Paris in time to take the place, for which I am indebted to you.

“ Yours obliged and obediently,

“ H. W.”

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In the following week, this most upright Plenipo's conscience growing slack, he slackened the strings of the bag so far as to admit the private correspondence of an acquaintance of mine, whose name he may learn whenever he thinks it worth his while to apply for it to me, who am his near neighbour.

To proceed with my disasters : the next was a pressing letter from Stockdale, handed to me by bag, declaring that he must have the rest of my *Memoirs*, because folks began to think it was all an hoax, as Liston or some other funny fellow says. *Que faire ?* Having, by some wonderful chance or providence, contrived to scrape together two hundred francs, I determined to cross the Channel once more ; for I hate to break my word.

Arrived at Mr. Stockdale's house, 'will a' I would call it were it at all cockneyish, I handed him over, as a plenipo-pacifier, the chief part of my delectable memoirs. I conceived that my disasters were now completely at an end, and I looked forwards to a rich harvest, with unbounded applause.

Unfortunately, Stockdale, in a courteous fit, acquainted the immortal Wellington that I was about to publish part of his private life, under the impression, of course, that every act which relates to so great a hero must be interesting.

Will it ever be believed ? His Grace, in the meek humility of his heart, has written to menace a prosecution if such trash be published. What trash, my dear Wellington ? Now, I will admit, for an instant, and it is really very good of me, that you are an excellent judge of literature, and could decide on the merits or demerits of a work with better taste and judgment than the first of Edinburgh reviewers. Still, in order to pronounce it trash, we should fancy that even Wellington himself must throw a hasty glance on one of its pages at least. Quite the contrary. Wellington knows himself to be the subject, and therefore wisely prejudgetes the book trash one fortnight before it sees the light ! So far so good ! But when

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my own Wellington, who has sighed over me, and groaned over me by the hour, talked of my wonderful beauty, ran after me, bribed Mrs. Porter over and over again, after I refused to listen to her overtures, only for a single smile from his beautiful Harriette ! Did he not kneel ? And was I not the object of his first, his most ardent wishes, on his arrival from Spain ? Only it was such a pity that Argyle got to my house first. No matter ! Though Argyle was not his rose, he had dwelled with it ; therefore, what could my tender swain Wellington do better than stand in the gutter at two in the morning, pouring forth his amorous wishes in the pouring rain, in strains replete with the most heart-rending grief, to the favoured and fortunate lover who had supplanted him, as Stockdale has indulged me by getting so inimitably delineated. When, I say, this faithful lover, whose love survived six winters, six frosts, six chilling, nay, killing frosts, when Wellington sends the ungentle hint to my publisher, of hanging me, beautiful, adored and adorable me, on whom he had so often hung ! *Alors je pend la tête !* Is it thus he would immortalise me ?

I do not mean to say that Wellington threatened to hang me, in so many words : but honestly, it was something to say the least, not very unlike it : viz., it assumed the questionable shape of—— The prosecution might take a different turn from the circumstance of my having written to him, stating that I would certainly publish some anecdotes from real life, to try to get paid for them, in case my tender lover refused me some small assistance, to procure a little bread and cheese or so. Of course, it could never enter the brain of any one, save that of stupidity personified, to conceive that so great a man as Wellington, ever did anything whatever, of which he was the least ashamed or minded my publishing. Nevertheless, since he has threatened to bring forward my soft epistles, in which I remember I wrote that old frights like himself, who could not be contented with amiable wives, but must

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run about to old procuresses, bribing them to decoy young girls, who are living in perfect retirement in Duke's Row, Somers Town, and not dreaming of harm, ought to pay us for the sacrifice they tempt us to make, as well as for our secrecy. However, all I entreat of my late tenderly enamoured wooer is, that he forthwith fulfil his threat and produce these said letters in court: and, lest a small trifle of hanging should be the result, but whether of him or me is yet to be seen, I'll e'en make my will, and so good-bye to ye, old Bombastes Furioso.

Yet I scarcely know how to take leave of the subject, it affects me so deeply! I should not have been half so much afraid of hanging, only I was subpoenaed on a trial at the Old Bailey a short time ago, as witness against a poor girl who stole a watch out of my house. She acknowledged the fact, and was honourably acquitted!

“Och! the devil fly away wid all the world!” shrieked out my Irish cook, a widow who had just lost her husband. “Sure my darlink's watch has been stolen out of the kitchen.”

She came flying into my room when I was ill in bed, and frightened me half out of my wits.

“Nonsense!” said I. “Who could steal your watch, think you?”

“Och! Don't bother me now. Sure it was the last thing my own darlink husband clapped his two good-looking eyes upon, before he died, and I'll murder every mother's son of you, but I'll have my watch!”

“For God's sake look for your watch, you provoking, impertinent creature, and don't stand there making a noise in my ears. Who on earth could steal your watch?”

“Oh! by the Almighty God, it was hanging on a nail of the kitchen-shelf half an hour ago, when I went out just to buy some petaties for my own dinner.”

“Why, not a soul has been here during your absence, except a very interesting young woman, who did not

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appear to be more than seventeen years of age. She has left her direction, as she wanted to be my house-maid. I desired her to let herself out, and to be sure to shut the street door after her. On her head she wore a straw bonnet with green ribbons ; but my room was rather dark, and that was all I noticed of her. I scarcely think I should know her again."

My Irish cook raved, roared, stormed, and bellowed along the streets, on her way to a magistrate, from whom, having obtained a warrant, she passed three whole days in wandering about London to look for young women with ribbons on their bonnets. Of these she contrived to coax three or four to walk with her to my house ; but, alas ! they did not include the person she wanted. At last she chanced to meet with a young female about seventeen years of age, who blushed deeply when she mentioned to her having been cruelly robbed of a watch. Without hesitation she seized her by the arm, and observing how the young woman trembled, under a promise of pardon prevailed on her to confess the theft, and immediately had her taken into custody. Next day two officers made me accompany them to Marlborough-street public office. The girl was fully committed for trial and sent to Newgate, where I visited her, and expressed my astonishment that so young a girl could commit so daring a robbery. Her plea was, that a soldier had seduced her, she was pregnant by him, and he loved her no longer. In short, her only chance of being admitted to visit him rested in her having money to give him. Love had made her so desperate, that she stole my Irish woman's watch on her way downstairs, merely to ensure one more interview with her faithless lover.

Oh this love ! this love !

For more than a week I was shut up all day long in the witness box at the Old Bailey. The first evening, only petty offences were tried. Two men for pig-stealing, a gentleman for stealing a piece of pickled pork, and concealing it about the lower parts of his

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person. This, notwithstanding it was a fundamental error, was pardoned, and excited an expression of loud applause from the gallery auditors. The judge reprimanded the noisy throng, with proper dignity, assuring them that, if this indecent conduct was repeated, they should be severely punished.

The next morning I saw three men condemned to be hanged. The same judge sat upon the bench. These dreadful scenes were new to me, and I was overpowered with a violent hysterical affection, for which I expected seven years transportation at least ; but the judge, it should seem, preferred the sound of sobs and tears to applause, from mere habit, for he took no sort of notice of me. I forget his name. He was a very old man, and spoke as if he took much snuff. I know not whether he or Denman is most respected : but this I know, that, for my own part, next to not being hanged at all, *plait à M. Wellington*, I should like Denman to pronounce sentence upon me : so pleasing a voice and so persuasive manner I never witnessed, and the most placid, benevolent countenance ! No one could see him on the bench, and not feel the comfortable conviction of his earnest wish to save the unfortunates, if it were consistent with his duty. Now I could not help fancying that the learned and snuffy judge was a little more convinced of the wholesomeness and convenience of hanging, than either Denman, or our good King George.

There was a handsome young house-breaker, whose favourable witness was his sweetheart. The judge, of course, declared that such evidence was good for nothing. However, at the request of the house-breaker's counsel, she was allowed to speak, although I don't think the oath was administered to her.

"Are you a girl of the town ?" asked the judge, to begin with.

The lady honestly owned she was, and, being further questioned by my lord judge, she gave an account of her lover being taken out of her room by two police officers.

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“ And did they not take you too ? ”

“ No, my lord.”

“ A pity ! ”

I observed Andrews among the counsellors, with his beak-nose, looking quite as wise and learned, as when he came forth a few years ago in defence of Mrs. Bertram, formerly Mrs. Kent. This gentleman stared at me with disgusting persevering effrontery. He seemed to me to be eternally labouring for distinction, from his discovery of loop-holes and knotty points in the law ; but his attempts were invariably unsuccessful. When it shall please the mighty Wellington to try to hang me, Andrews certainly shall not plead in my behalf, to show cause why I should not have such a rise in the world. I can get an old woman in petticoats to prose for me for half the money !

Young Law, Lord Ellenborough’s son, was a very smart, fine, young gentleman ; and his impatience of temper passed, I dare say occasionally, for quickness, His wig was never straight on his head. I rather fancy he liked to show his own good head of hair under it. He was constantly explaining to the witnesses what the snuffy judge said to them, from very impatience, and then again he would explain to my lud on the bench the blunders and mistakes of witnesses.

Young Law cross-questioned an old woman in an antique costume.

“ When you first beheld the deceased did you, from your own observation, conceive him to be in a dying state ? ”

“ He said he was very bad, sir.”

“ I do not ask you what he said, my good woman. I want to know what your own opinion of his health was.”

“ Why, lord, sir, everybody said he was in a bad way : upon my word they did.”

“ Come, come ! This won’t do, upon your word ! What’s upon your word to do with it ? Don’t you

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know you are on your oath ? What—was—your—own—opinion, as to the man's state of health ? ”

“ Oh law ! ” said the witness, and then paused. I thought, really, that she was calling him by his name. “ Oh law ! I think he must have been but poorly ! very so so, indeed.”

“ My lud,” said young Law, tossing up his little head with such uncontrollable impatience towards the bench, as to shake out a cloud of powder from his wig, “ my lud, I am no match for this woman. She had better be examined by some one more competent.”

The good woman was desired to leave the witness-box.

I was in a rage with Phillip's brogue ; because I should otherwise have been so delighted with him. People say that a brogue is expressive ; but I think a little goes a great way.

When the learned judge began to sum up the evidence, I thought we never should have done with it. I could not help naming him slow and sure, from what I observed of him.

“ Mary Allen states that—(holding the paper close to his eyes)—Mary Allen states—she—states—she—no—she states—nothing—but she—ah—no ! Mary Allen states, that—ah ! right ! that she knew the prisoner—when—when—when—Mary Allen states, that she knew the prisoner when he lodged—yes—Mary Allen knew the prisoner, when he—when he—when he—when he—”

“ My lud ! ” said young Law, popping up his little powdered head again, in a high fever of desperate impatience—“ My lud ! shall I order candles ? ”

Good-bye, judge snuffy. Heaven knows how soon you and I may meet again, thanks to the great Wellington. It is a nervous subject to me, yet I cannot help reverting to it. However, let us change it and proceed with my *Memoirs*.

There is surely something harsh and unmanly in threatening a woman with any kind of law or prosecu-

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tion, unless she were to do something much worse than telling the truth: and there is a double want of gallantry in threatening a fair lady, whose favours have been earnestly courted! *N'est-ce pas?*

The man who lays his hand on a woman, save in the way of kindness, is a monster, whom it were gross flattery to call coward.

Now what would this excellent author say to Mr. Jack Ketch's hand being laid on one, and that not quite in the way of kindness either? Yet, if all the lords and law-givers are like Wellington, in the habit of threatening poor devils of authors and book-sellers with prosecution, hanging, and destruction, as often as they are about to publish any facts, which do not altogether redound to their honour and glory, while they modestly swallow all the *outré* applause which may be bestowed on their luck or their talents for killing men and winning battles, I can no longer be surprised that even Beaufort has maintained his good character up to this present writing, since publishers will quake when heroes bully.

There's no spirit nowadays.

CHAPTER XLI

London, 20th January.

ANOTHER hero in a passion ! Another lover threatens prosecution ! No less a personage than that most prolific Plenipo, the Hon. Frederick Lamb, who yesterday called on Stockdale to threaten him, or us, with prosecution, death and destruction, if his conduct towards me in times, auld lang syne, was printed and published in any part of my *Memoirs*, after Part I., which he acknowledged that his counsel had informed him he could not lay hold of. No wonder that he is sore. I have certainly told, as the Hon. Frederick Lamb was well aware must be the case, harsh truths of him, I confess : but then it will disgust one to think that a man would feel such violent passion for a girl without the heart to save her from absolute want afterwards. Yet I never deceived him, and I endeavoured to live on nothing, at my nurse's in Somers Town, *pour ses beaux yeux*, as long as I possibly could. When I say nothing I mean nothing, in the literal sense of the word. Frederick had never given me a single shilling up to the time when hard necessity obliged me to accept the Duke of Argyle for my lover.

As to Frederick Lamb's rage at my publishing these facts, he was fully acquainted with my intention ; and had he, now that he is in better circumstances, only opened his heart, or even purse, to have given me but a few hundreds, there would have been no book, to the infinite loss of all persons of good taste and genuine morality, and who are judges of real merit. But I hate harping on peoples' unkindness, and *vice versa*,

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I cannot omit to acknowledge the generous condescension of Earl Spencer, who, though I have not the honour to be in the least acquainted with him, has very repeatedly assisted me. In short, his lordship has promptly complied with every request for money I ever made to him, merely as a matter of benevolence.

Lord Rivers, with whom I have but a bowing acquaintance, has not only often permitted me to apply to him for money; but once, when I named a certain sum to him, he liberally doubled it; because, as he kindly stated in his letter, he was so truly sorry to think that one who possessed such a generous heart as mine should not be in affluent circumstances. Lord Palmerston also, one fine day, did me a pecuniary service without my having applied to him for it. Neither can I express half the gratitude I feel, and shall entertain to the end of my life, for the steady, active friendship Mr. Brougham has invariably evinced towards me, actuated, as he is, solely by a spirit of philanthropy. When I see a man of such brilliant talents pleading the cause of almost all those persons whose characters I have sketched in these pages, with such honest warmth and benevolence of feeling, as Brougham did yesterday, to say I look up to him and love him, is but a cold description of the sentiments he inspires in my heart.

“A pretty list indeed,” said Brougham, alluding to my characters, as advertised in the newspapers by Stockdale. “Almost every one of my particular friends is among them! The poor Duke of Argyle! What has he done? I am very angry with you. I don’t really think I can shake hands with you.”

“I have strictly adhered to the truth.”

“Yes; but then, who wants to have their secrets exposed! Secrets, some of them, sixteen years old.”

“Who do you think would have entrusted me with their secrets fifteen years ago? Besides, why don’t my old friends keep me among them? They are all rich. I have applied to them and they refuse me the bare means of existence. Must I not strive

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to live by my wits? You say you have not read even the first part of my book. How do you know that it is severe?"

"Well! perhaps not! The Duke of Leinster tells me that it is not severe, nor does it, he says, contain any libel."

"To be sure not! Why, as His Grace goes on, he will find that I give him credit for a little more intellect than even a Newfoundland dog! *Que voulez-vous?* But I wish to explain the Duke of Beaufort's conduct, certainly."

"Aye! true! The Duke of Beaufort treated you shamefully. You are very welcome to tell the world that I am your counsel in that business; that I said then, and repeat now, that he took a shameful advantage of your generosity. There, you behaved only too well."

"Thus then, though many of you are angry with me, you all agree in being disgusted with the heartless selfishness of the Duke of Beaufort. The Duke of Portland says he cannot conceive or understand it. So say Montagu, Fred Bentinck, Headfort, yourself: in short, if Beaufort means to fight all those who call his treatment of me infamous, he may gain the high-sounding epitaph of fighting Bob before he knows where he is: so farewell Beaufort. I would not change hearts with you. May you meet with all the respect you merit here, and forgiveness hereafter. I have certainly deserved better from you."

"Well! never mind Beaufort," said Brougham, "tell all the truth of him; but, as to the others, pray don't be severe. Write something from your fancy, I cannot endure the idea of all this. You perhaps do not address your letters correctly when you want money. You are so careless. I was once desired to send you some in a great hurry, and there was no date to your letter! I am sure these old friends of yours would provide for you, if applied to civilly."

"I tell you, you judge of them by your own excellent heart: you, who have never refused me any

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assistance I asked you for, nor any act of friendship in your power, while I have not nor never had any claim upon you. There is the Duke of Argyle, who used to write thus :

“ ‘ If at any future time you are in trouble and will condescend to apply to me, you shall be as welcome as my sister ; for indeed, I am afraid, I love you.’

“ Well, I have, at His Grace’s request, condescended to apply civilly, stating my distress, and humbly entreating for anything he could conveniently afford, at least fifty times : and I have never received one single shilling, nor any proof of friendship since it pleased him to become *le beau papa*. Everybody who knows me will admit that I have all my life been disposed to like Argyle, to pardon all his sins against me, and inspire others with a favourable opinion of his heart and character ; but the invariable excessive selfishness and want of feeling which His Grace evinces towards me has, at length, I confess, disgusted me.”

I have a few more high characters in reserve to sketch for the benefit of my readers ; but they are too noble and brilliant to come in at the fag-end of a work. I mean therefore to conclude these *Memoirs*, and take my rest for a month or so, in order to collect my ideas for a new work in two volumes, which ought to be printed on the most expensive hot-pressed vellum, wholly and solely for the express purpose of immortalising His Grace of Richmond, the Marquis of Londonderry, Lord Maryborough, Grand Master of the Mint, and of the Art of Love, and Mr. Arthur Chichester, contrary to their particular wishes ; and at his own earnest, urgent and especial desire expressed in a letter now in my possession, the Earl of Clancarde.

Oh muse, &c. &c. &c., grant me eloquence to do justice to my subjects on that great and mighty occasion ! In the meantime let me conclude, or rather let us proceed to draw these anecdotes into something like the form of a conclusion, because I their writer

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am tired of them, if you the reader of them are not.

My friend Rosabella permitted her interesting son to pass a week with my impudent nephew, George Woodcock, on our return to Paris.

“What would you give to be as clever as Carlo ?” said I, on the day after he had left us to return to his college.

“Clever !” repeated George, in a tone of infinite contempt. “Clever !” He is the greatest ass in the world. Why he plays at cricket in gloves ! Clever indeed ! Only come and see him swim !”

My sister Fanny never came to the continent, and, when I again joined her in London some months afterwards, I found her in very indifferent spirits.

“In vain do I strive,” said Fanny to me, “I cannot get the better of Parker’s marriage, and I never shall.”

One day, while I was dressing to drive out in my carriage, my servant informed me that Fanny had just called on me, and was in the drawing-room. I was surprised that she did not come up to my bedroom, that being her constant habit whenever I happened to be at my toilette. I hurried on my pelisse, and went down to join her. She was sitting near the window, with her head reclined on her hand, and appeared more than usually pensive.

“My dear Fanny,” said I, “what is the matter ? Why did not you come upstairs ?”

“I feel a weight here,” said she, laying her hand on her heart. “It is not a weight of spirits only ; but there is something not right here. I am sick and faint.”

“A drive in Hyde Park will do you good,” said I, and we were soon seated in the carriage. Turning down Baker Street we saw Colonel Parker. Fanny was greatly agitated. He did not seem to have observed us.

“I dare say he is only just come to town, and means to call and see his child,” said I, hoping to

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enliven her. We then drove twice up the Park, and Fanny made an effort to answer the beaux who flocked around the carriage, with cheerfulness. Suddenly she complained to me again of sickness, occasioned by some pressure or tightness about the heart.

"I am sorry to take you from this gay scene," said poor Fanny, "but I am too unwell to remain." I immediately pulled the check-string, and desired my coachman to drive to Hertford Street, Mayfair, where Fanny was then residing. After remaining with her half an hour she begged me to leave her, while she endeavoured to obtain a little sleep. She made light of the sickness, and told me to call and take her into the park on the following day. I did so, and, just as I was stepping out of my carriage in Hertford Street for that purpose, Lord Hertford came running downstairs to join me, from Fanny's apartment.

"Don't get out, Harriette," said he, "as you will only lose time; but go directly for a surgeon. I was going myself. Fanny is very ill, and her physician has prescribed bleeding, without loss of time."

In the most extreme agitation I hurried after the surgeon and brought him with me in my carriage. Fanny was now affected with such a violent palpitation of the heart that its pulsations might be distinctly seen at the opposite side of the room through her handkerchief.

"I am very ill, Harriette," said the dear sufferer, with encouraging firmness, holding out her hand to me; "but don't frighten yourself. I shall soon get better: indeed I shall. Bleeding will do me good directly," continued she, observing, with affectionate anxiety, the fast gathering tears in my eyes.

I called Lord Hertford aside, and addressed him: "Tell me, I earnestly implore you, most candidly and truly, do you think Fanny will recover?"

"I do not think she ever will," answered Hertford.

"Nonsense!" said I, forcing my mind by an effort to disagree with him. "Fanny was so perfectly well

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the day before yesterday, so fresh, and her lips so red and beautiful ; and then many people are afflicted with these palpitations of the heart, and recover perfectly."

" If her pulse beat with her heart, I should have hopes ; but her pulse is calm, and I have none. Disorders of the heart are incurable."

Instead of wishing to display feeling, Lord Hertford seemed ashamed, and afraid of feeling too much.

For another fortnight, Fanny's sufferings were dreadfully severe and, being quite aware of her danger, she requested that her body might be examined after her death for the benefit of others. My readers will, I hope, do me the justice to acquit me of affectation, when I say that this subject still affects me so deeply, I cannot dwell upon it. All the world were anxiously, and almost hourly, inquiring if there were hope : Sir William Knighton and Sir John Millman, her medical attendants, gave us none, or very slight hopes, even from the first hour.

Fanny never slept, nor enjoyed a single interval of repose. Her courage and patient firmness exceeded all I had imagined possible, even in a man. Once, and once only, she spoke of Colonel Parker ; for it was the study of every moment of her life to avoid giving us pain. Fanny called me to her bedside : it was midnight.

" Harriette, remember, for my sake, not to be very angry with poor Parker. It is true, you have written to say I am ill, and he refuses to come and shake hands with me ; but then, believe me, he does not think me so ill as I really am, or he would come. Oblige me by forgiving him ! Now talk to me of something else : no more of this pray ! "

I pressed her hand and immediately changed the subject. She begged, when we told her of Lord Hertford having had straw put down by her door, and of all his constant, steady attentions, that, when he came next, she might see him and thank him. In consequence of this request, he was admitted on the

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following morning. Fanny was not able to talk much ; but she seemed gratified and happy to see him. When his lordship was about to depart, she held out her hand to him. Hertford said, in a tone of much real feeling, "God bless you, poor thing," and then left the room.

A monster, in the shape of a nurse to Colonel Parker's child, Louisa, took this opportunity to remain out with the infant the whole of the night ! I will no longer dwell on this subject ; for, indeed, I cannot.

Fanny was my only friend on earth. I had no sister but her. She was my hope, and my consoler in affliction, ever eloquent in my defence, and would not have forsaken me to have become the wife of an emperor, but God willed Fanny's Death.

I saw her laid low in her kindred vaults,
And her immortal part with angels lives.

Only three weeks had elapsed since Fanny's lovely, laughing countenance, as she drove round the ring in Hyde Park, excited the admiration of all who beheld her. Her life was ebbing fast, when her friends acceded to her earnest desire to be removed to a more airy situation.

Reclined at length on a couch, in her new apartment, Fanny's spirits appeared so much improved as to encourage hopes which had become extinct.

"Do you not breathe with rather less pain ?" I asked, while I pressed her cold damp hand between my own.

"At all events," answered poor Fanny, "I would rather die here, than in the close apartment I have just quitted. How sweet and refreshing the flowers smelt, as I was carried along the garden ! I did not see them, for I could not endure the light. I wish I could," continued Fanny, fixing her clear, still lovely blue eyes on my face beseechingly. "The prospect, I understand, is most beautiful, from the room above us ; but I shall never see it."

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“ Do, dearest Fanny,” said I, making a violent effort to conceal my tears, lest they should agitate my suffering sister, “ let me open one of the shutters a very little. The air is mild and delicious, and the heat no longer oppressive, as it was when you passed through the garden.”

The last ray of the setting sun fell on poor Fanny’s pale, beautiful features, as I drew back the curtains. It was one of those lovely evenings in the month of June, which often succeed a thunder-storm, and the honeysuckles, which clustered round the windows, emitted a rich and fragrant perfume.

I asked her if the fresh air did not enliven her a little.

She requested to have her head raised, and I rested it on my bosom.

“ Alas ! ” said poor Fanny, “ gloriously as the sun is setting, I may now behold it for the last time ! ”

Cold drops hung on her fair, lovely forehead. I feared that the slightest agitation would destroy at once the fragile being I held in my arms, and yet, mastered by the strong impulse of irresistible tenderness, I suddenly imprinted a kiss on my sister’s dying lips.

The last tear poor Fanny ever shed trembled in her eyes. Forcing a smile, I now endeavoured to address her with cheerfulness, and administered her last draught of goat’s milk, which she held firmly in her hand without requiring my assistance.

“ I did not believe I should shed another tear,” said Fanny, brushing away the drops which were stealing slowly down her fair, wan cheeks. “ Pray for me, Harriette! Pray that my sufferings may soon cease.”

“ I do pray for you, my poor sister, and God knows how earnestly. Be assured, dearest, that your sufferings will very soon cease. You will recover, or you will be at rest for ever. Remember my love, that we have all committed many faults, and you may be called upon to suffer yet a few more hours, as your only punishment, before you are permitted to rest

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eternally with your God. Yet a little fortitude, my dearest Fanny. It is all that will be required of you."

Fanny seemed deeply impressed with what I had said. Her agony was at that moment dreadfully severe. She crossed her hands on her breast, and there was something sublime in the stern expression her features assumed, while she suppressed the cries which nature would almost have wrung from her. She compressed her lips, and her brow was contracted. In this attitude, with her eyes raised to heaven, she appeared a martyr, severe in virtue and almost masculine fortitude.

"I am better," said Fanny, half an hour after having made this strong effort.

"Thank God!" I ejaculated, taking hold of her hand.

"What o'clock is it?" she inquired.

"Near seven."

"I am very sleepy. I could sleep, if you would promise to continue holding my hand, and would not leave me."

I placed myself close to my sister, with her cold damp hand clasped between both of mine.

"I am near you, always, dearest," said I. "Sleeping or waking, I shall never leave you more." Fanny threw her arms once more round my neck, and with a convulsive last effort pressed me to her heart.

"May the Almighty for ever bless you!" said she, and, sinking back on her pillow, a gentle sleep stole on her senses. I watched her lovely countenance with breathless anxiety.

In less than an hour poor Fanny opened her eyes and fixed them on me with a bright smile, expressive of the purest happiness.

"I am quite well," said Fanny, in a tone of great animation.

Again her eyes closed and her breathing became shorter.

Suddenly, a slight convulsion of the upper lip

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induced me to place my trembling hand on my sister's heart.

I felt it beat !

Joy flushed my face with a momentary hectic—
And then, hope fled for ever !

Fanny's cheek, still warm and lovely, rested on her arm. The expression of pain and agony was exchanged for the calm, still, innocent smile of a sleeping infant.

I had felt the last faint vibration of poor Fanny's heart.

CHAPTER XLII

IT was some time previous to the death of my sister, that I was induced by the advice of Mr. Brougham and Mr. Treslove to commence proceedings against the Duke of Beaufort for the recovery of the small annuity he had thought fit to deprive me of.

I have already related the circumstance of my having refused to marry Lord Worcester over and over again, solely to relieve the minds of his parents, and further went down to Oxford to implore Worcester, by all his future hopes of happiness, to pass his solemn word to the duke and duchess never to marry me ; and it was only at my request he could be induced to promise to go abroad for one year, on condition that his father made me an allowance. This the duke gladly agreed to, and sent Worcester to me, accompanied by his attorney, to ask me what I required.

"Enough to pay for my board only," was my reply. "Nor do I require bonds or signatures. The duke is a gentleman, and will take care that the person who has complied with all his wishes shall not come to want. Of that I am well satisfied."

Robinson told me to fear nothing, and down I went into Devonshire, where I might have wanted bread, without obtaining a shilling or an answer to any one of my letters addressed to His Grace, had I not, after waiting four or five months, been obliged to threaten that I would join Worcester in Spain. This, and this only, brought a polite letter, enclosing two quarters of the promised allowance, from His Grace.



A VIEW taken in HYDE PARK.

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I should like to know if His Grace or his noble son will take upon them to deny any of these facts, or that he did not desire me to make my own terms if I would not marry Worcester ? and for which, all the world are crying “Off! Off! Off!” to the Duke of Beaufort, just as if he were Kean the actor. At all events, the facts I am now proceeding to relate were public.

Neither Brougham nor Treslove could be induced to believe that, since the Duke of Beaufort had bestowed a small annuity on me for the purpose of separating me from Lord Worcester, it could ever be His Grace's wish to rob me of that annuity, while the intent and purpose of it was fulfilled. I had indeed written a few lines to Lord Worcester, trusting to their humanity to forgive me for the exercise of mine ; but, since my letter did not interrupt the object of the bond, which was to separate us, nobody would believe that the duke wished to throw on the world, me, who might have been his daughter, without the means of existence.

“The duke will prefer giving you fifty thousand pounds,” said the duke's attorney to me.

My answer was, “Were I selfish, I would marry Worcester.”

To satisfy these incredulous gentlemen, I renewed my applications to His Grace ; but they were unattended to, as before.

As the day of trial drew near, I expressed my astonishment to my legal advisers that they wished me to bring forward a case like this, which I must inevitably lose if Lord Worcester produced the letter I wrote to him, which was directly in the teeth of the conditions of the bond.

“Fear nothing,” was Brougham's answer. “Lord Worcester cannot appear in it without irremediable disgrace and loss of character.”

“How can you imagine it possible,” asked Brougham, “that Lord Worcester, the man who for years together has sworn to make you his wife, can appear

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in evidence against you, for the purpose of leaving you destitute, and effectually robbing you of the trifling independence which you were gracious enough to be satisfied with, when you might have been Duchess of Beaufort?"

I was at last almost convinced that Lord Worcester could not act thus.

"If he does he ought to be ashamed of himself," said Fred Bentinck, "and so I shall tell him. I always tell everybody exactly what I think of them, for my part."

The day of trial arrived. The very hour approached, and Worcester had not obeyed his father's peremptory summons to come up to town and attend as evidence against me. The duke, knowing there could be no other witness, was in a terrible fever of agitation, as my attorney told me.

Just at the last, when the furious duke had given up all hopes of his son, he, in a great fright, proposed to my attorney to pay him twelve hundred pounds, rather than stand the event of the trial alone, and Brougham had scarcely given his written consent to this compromise, which was immediately signed, when the most liberal, generous, high-minded, and noble Marquis of Worcester stepped out of his travelling carriage, and came driving towards the scene of action, with my poor, ill-fated letter in his hand. Such at least is my attorney's account of the business. He may be referred to by the incredulous. I was not present,

Thus was I indebted to the duke's fears of wanting a witness, or being hissed out of court, for the sum of twelve hundred pounds, which was handed to me as soon as I had accompanied the attorney to Westminster Hall and taken the following oath :

"THE KING'S BENCH,
"Between Harriette Wilson, Plt.
and

^{and}
“ His Grace the Duke of Beaufort, Deft.

"Harriette Wilson of the above named

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plaintiff, maketh oath, and saith that she hath, in the schedule hereunder written, set forth a full and true list of all the letters, papers, and writings in her possession, or power, written by the Marquis of Worcester to this deponent, and that she hath not retained or delivered to any person, any copies, or extracts of them, or any or either of them, save and except any extract that this deponent may have sent or delivered to the above defendant."

And now good-bye, Beaufort.

I forgot to mention my having met with Lord Francis Conyngham, now Earl of Mount Charles, in Paris, with whose beauty I was much attracted. There was nothing national in his manner, nor, I think, in his character. He was perhaps rather cold; but amiable and truly unaffected. Such as he was, I remember he interested me very much. I did not fall in love with him, partly because he had the tremendous bad taste not to fall in love with me; but his ill health and his cough induced me to encourage somewhat of the tenderness of a mamma towards him; and I used to dream about his eyes, they were so very blue and beautiful.

I have often met the young Marquis of Graham too, who is not very popular, as I am told; but that is nothing to me.

Any fool may be popular: it is the easiest thing in the world.

Only be a good listener and praise everybody on the face of the earth, that is the whole fact.

However, Lord Graham is rather reserved; *mais ne méprisez pas les personnes froides; elles ont leurs bons côtés.* Lord Graham is very just, friendly, and strictly honourable, neither is he the stupid person many imagine him to be. For my own part, I like Lord Graham, and always have had reason to like him; and I am sure Beau Brummell would like him, because his clothes are uniformly so well made and in such good taste.

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My readers will believe that my poor sister's death affected me deeply, and my health suffered seriously from my anxiety and want of rest. About two days after I had seen my dear sister buried, Amy appeared to feel something like compassion for the weak state in which she found me. She suddenly took me in her arms, and told me she feared I should die, and then burst into a flood of tears, as she added that she knew well she had never been kind to me!

Everything was forgiven from my heart and soul at that moment; but Amy soon ran up a fresh score of offences, just in her usual way.

I cannot in justice help relating Sophia's kind attention to her sister Fanny in her last moments. Not that there was merit in one sister loving another, who was too amiable ever to have made a single enemy in her life: one, whom the most cold-blooded and unfeeling could not but love: yet, still I am glad I can, with truth, affirm that Sophia did her duty in this instance, and Amy also, in the daytime. The night-watching devolved entirely on me; but whoever else might have watched poor Fanny I would never have quitted her.

From the hour of my sister's death, my dearest mother's health visibly declined, and exactly three months after Fanny had breathed her last, I followed my parent to her grave. From that period I was for more than two months confined to my room, and, generally, to my bed, with a violent liver complaint, or I know not what.

"It is liver," said Doctor Bree, "and she must swallow plenty of mercury."

"No such thing," said Doctor Nevinson. "It is neither more nor less than over-excitement of the nerves, with too much anxiety, fatigue, and distress of mind."

"All this has disordered her liver," reiterated Doctor Bree, who has written a book on people's livers.

"I won't stand it," said Doctor Nevinson; "and,

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before Harriette begins upon your mercury, I will call in Dr. Pemberton."

"Never mind that cough, ma'am," said Pemberton: you may keep it till you are eighty, and it will be an amusement to you. It is only a nervous cough."

However I continued very ill in spite of all these gentlemen could do for me.

When my spirits and health were at their very worst, I was informed that poor Julia was dying and wanted to see me. I could not refuse her request. Her features bore the fixed rigidity of death when I entered her room. Her complaint, like her late poor friend's, was a disease of the heart, and there was no remedy.

She talked much of her dear Fanny, and said she had been certain from the first that she should soon follow her to the grave.

I insisted on writing to Napier, who was at Melton Mowbray.

"No! no!" said poor Julia. "If you will lend me your carriage, I am sure I shall be able to join him in a few days. I shall soon be better."

I wrote notwithstanding, and Napier came to her, kneeled by her bedside, read the service of the dead, and then—and then he again read prayers to her. All this he afterwards told me himself.

"You must have killed her," said I, "in so dreadfully weak a state as she was in."

This conversation took place some weeks after her death.

"Nonsense," replied Napier. "Why say such cruel unfeeling things to me? Upon my honour, there was no chance for poor, sweet, dear Julia, who was the image of death when I—"

"Oh Julia! Angel Julia! I cannot bear it!" he added, pulling his hair, and throwing the handsome pillows of my new sofa all about the room.

"*Doucement! doucement! s'il vous plaît,*" I observed. "Julia was my friend, I regret her certainly; but my feelings are so deeply affected by the death of my

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adored mother, whom God knows how I have loved, that there is scarcely room in my heart for any other grief, and, at all events, I don't quite see the use of your knocking my new sofa about."

"Very true," said Napier, suddenly jumping up; and, having wiped his eyes with the back of his hand, he began briskly to make fierce love to me.

"But Julia?" said I.

"Oh, Julia!" retorted he, banging another pillow on the ground, "I had her laid out in state, and wax candles were kept burning round her coffin for a fortnight: and I paid half of all her debts!"

"Suppose you had paid the whole?"

"Nonsense! They were very thankful for half."

"And what is to become of her poor children?"

"A noble relative has taken one, and Lord Folkestone another, and Mrs. Armstrong is consulting me about the rest."

There was nothing on earth, not even Fanny nor Lord Ponsonby, I ever loved, as I loved my mother. I do not dwell on the subject, nor on the manner of her death; because it is to me a very sacred one. No one, not even Amy, will call my affection for that beloved, that sainted parent, in question.

I am now about to return to Paris, from where I propose sending Stockdale this volume, or continuation of my *Memoirs*, provided you are all grateful and civil for the trouble I have already given myself; but I will pause now, at this period of my endeared parent's death; for my habits and character became more serious and melancholy from that hour. Meyler's sudden death too, which happened soon afterwards, certainly added much to those cold, desponding sensations, with which I was now often affected.

One night I dreamed that I saw my dearest mother standing at the top of a high hill or mountain: so high that her head seemed almost to touch the clouds, and her drapery was of such indefinite texture, that I doubted whether I saw a shadow or a real substance. She looked very pale and beautifully placid, as she

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pointed towards the heavens, fixing her eyes on my face.

I would have given half my existence when I awoke for such another dream ! Having, in that hope, vainly courted sleep for several hours, my mind being deeply impressed with the subject, I sat down. I imagined the vision subjoined, with which I will for the present conclude, after wishing to all, a good night and pleasant dreams, and slumbers light.

A VISION

As balmy sleep had charmed my cares to rest,
And love itself was banished from my breast,
A train of phantoms, in wild order, rose,
And, joined, this intellectual scene, compose.

METHOUGHT a spirit beckoned me, from the height of a steep mountain : its drapery appeared to be now of earthly texture, and anon but the bright rays of the sun, glittering on a cloud, which enveloped the form of an angel. Her beautiful features were benignly placid. The shadowy paleness of her countenance seemed as though touched by the moon's softest beam ; yet it was the bright sun, in the meridian of its splendour, and oppressed me with its heat. To ascend the vast acclivity of the mountain presented a work of such danger and fatigue that I hesitated. The spirit turned from me with an expression of tender sorrow. Its profile, which now became visible, was familiar to me ! I threw myself on my knees and raised my clasped hands to Heaven ! "I will endure thy sun's scorching rays, O God of Mercy !" said I, "with the toils and perils of this thorny road, in meek resignation to thy Divine will. Grant me but life to accomplish the task !"

A smile now irradiated the features of the beautiful vision. Hope, doubt, and anxiety were blended in its expression, while the calm of angels' happiness prevailed, as though the spirit had passed the ordeal of human sufferings. She pointed with her right hand to the heavens ; and, as she raised her eyes in the

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same direction, I saw a seraphic, radiant smile illumine her countenance for an instant, and then the figure was indistinctly veiled by the clouds, into which, gradually blending, it receded from my sight into thin air. My tears now fell in despondency at the dangers and labour of the task I had undertaken; yet I toiled on with indefatigable industry. "Oh! for the light of thy benign countenance, to cheer me on my dreary road," said I, sighing heavily. "Yet no! rest thou in pure eternal happiness, unclouded by the sight of early sufferings."

The sharp, burning stones and flints wounded my feet and caused me extreme anguish. At length, exhausted in body, though unsubdued in mind, I sunk down on the earth, hoping, by a short interval of rest, to recover my strength. Suddenly, the air was fanned with soft refreshing breezes; the feathered choir chanted their enlivening strains; the trees about me were covered with ripe, delicious fruit; luxurious repasts were profusely spread in groves, where nymphs enjoyed the fragrant shades, or danced and gambolled in wild and careless gaiety. A lovely female, fantastically though tastefully habited, smilingly entreated me to turn from my thorny road and follow her; but gay luxury possessed no charms for one who ambitioned higher joys. Hunger, thirst, and labour, with the goal of happiness in view, were more suited to my character, nor dreamed I of merit in declining mere senseless ease. Again I prostrated myself on the earth, and, pressing my hands to my burning temples, prayed for strength sufficient to keep out despondency.

The gates of pleasure now were closed upon me. My head became giddy. My lungs were oppressed, and I was sinking to the earth, when I felt myself withheld, by the firm grasp of some one behind me, who placed me gently on the ground, and presented to my lips some fruit, which instantly revived me.

On opening my eyes, I beheld at my side an aged man, whose white beard descended to his middle. "I am called Fortitude," said he. "My hand alone can

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lead you to the summit of your wishes. We will perform our task together. Nor will I forsake you till you forsake yourself."

Invigorated by the fruits which were presented to me by Fortitude, and comforted with the prospect of a friend to guide my trembling steps, we now continued our way along the pathless, barren track of the mountain, which seemed to mock my eagerness and retire as I advanced.

Suddenly, the atmosphere was impregnated with the odour of the Indian berry, which grew in immense quantities around me. My senses were affected by it, and a voluptuous indolence began to steal over me. My hand shrunk from the grasp of Fortitude, who continued his firm and undeviating road, frequently beckoning me to follow him. My eagerness now relaxed. My senses were overpowered, and I scarcely regretted my stern guide, when the windings of the mountain concealed him from my sight. At this time, I beheld, coming towards me, a being of extraordinary beauty. His age might be near thirty, judging by the strong growth of a beard, which curled in rich abundance over his chin; but his dark blue eye of fire told him younger.

"I am called Passion," said he. "There lies your road to Peace and Happiness," and he pointed to the height of the mountain. "Misery is here, and, though left of all when you forsake me, I scorn to complain. I deceive none but the weak and the wilful. If this bursting heart, this writhing lip speak not, leave me to the fate I deserve, and which I shall meet undismayed. Misery lies this way," repeated Passion, tearing his luxurious hair in all the frenzy of maddened sensation, while his teeth gnawed his nether lip till the red current disfigured a mouth of unequalled loveliness. He was turning from me with rapidity.

"Stay," said I faintly. He snatched me to his heart in all the wildness of frenzy. His heaving bosom seemed to threaten suffocation. His ardent gaze, and the liquid fire flashing from his eyes, dazzled

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and bewildered me. They spoke of feelings but guessed at by our softer nature; yet coloured by our sanguine minds even beyond reality. The pulsations of his heart were seen, nay almost heard; and still he curbed the passion which was consuming him; and still he had not pressed the lip, which quivered with delicious expectation. Now, with an effort almost supernatural, he threw me from him. His cheeks, late vermillion glow, were changed to the ashy palleness of death; his Herculean strength to the feebleness of infancy.

“Pursue thy happier path,” said he, in accents scarcely audible, “nor seek thy destruction.”

I threw myself on his bosom——. The delirium was succeeded by total insensibility, from which I slowly recovered, and, opening my languid eyes, I beheld myself in the arms of a hideous satyr!

The fright and horror which I experienced awoke me.

POSTSCRIPT

BY THE EDITOR

IN every age of life, man requires relaxation after the fatigues and the cares of business : but the distinction of rank and the forms of modern society prevent his enjoying freedom of social intercourse. Hence have arisen, in France, those assemblies of literary men, who, under the presidency of some celebrated lady, have distinguished themselves by their labours, and have enriched their country in the various branches of science and of literature.

The utility and advantage to literary men of communicating their ideas have been equally felt in this country ; and, from the time of Shakespeare to that of Johnson, mixed societies have been formed, in the freedom and conviviality of mirth, for the discussion of literary subjects. By these means, strength and copiousness have been imparted to the English language. The French, too, have introduced more correctness and elegance into their language, similar to the Greeks in the time of Pericles, by a greater devotion to the muses.

Monsieur Barthelemy speaking of the influence of Aspasia on the arts, the society, and the literature of Greece says, “*Les Grecs furent encore moins étonnés de sa beauté, que de son eloquence, que de la profondeur, et des agréments de son esprit. Socrate, Alcibiade, les gens de lettres, et les artistes, les plus renommés, les Athéniens, et les Athénienes les plus aimables, s’assemblaient auprès de cette femme singulière, qui parlait, à touts, leur langue, et qui s’attirait les regards de tous.*”

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If a Prince of Wales should not think it unbecoming in him to have honoured the society of Mrs. Abington, it is not less creditable to the first Marquis of Lansdowne, Mr. Sheridan, and other celebrated characters, to have appreciated the elegance, the accomplishments and the acquirements of that lady.

Comparisons are odious, says some saw or adage, therefore, without comparing Harriette Wilson to any of her predecessors, it is due to her from me, her editor, to say that she first introduced order and decorum into the reign of fashion, that she reformed and improved the great world, that she established regulations, among which was one, that no man should be introduced into her world until he had been first presented to her, and another, that due homage should be paid to her in all public places.

That Miss Wilson did possess an undivided allegiance, no one who has lived in our times will be so daring or so venturesome as to deny; that she established a voluntary submission to her power, it will be presumption to doubt; that she has subdued conquerors, and that she has drawn within the influence of her dominion, great and celebrated characters, whether by the charms of her conversation, the sprightliness of her ready wit, or the elegance of her manners, by the glare of her beauty, by the sweet tones of her voice, or by a combination of all, those who have been attracted by her enchantments, if the spell be now broken, may be able to explain. It may be attributed to her, as to Orpheus, who, as we all recollect, by the power of his music tamed wild beasts and monsters of every kind, that all were obedient to her voice. Not that I mean to insinuate that her lovers were wild beasts or monsters, until they were drawn into the vortex of her numerous attractions, and thus became humanised and polished, though a keener satirist than myself might furnish some small portion of amusement, by tracing certain wild and monstrous propensities, which might be compared with their untamed and domesticated state, and their

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conduct and habits since they have divested themselves of the silken cords by which, while in her custody, they had been directed or restrained.

We have now seen Miss Wilson in various fluctuations of her reign ; but not in all of them. She has already promised some further sketches. If she has endeavoured, in her *Memoirs*, to illustrate the characters of those who principally figure in them, while she has wielded the lash of truth, she has lost no opportunity to do justice to their merits.

These *Memoirs*, in their character of fidelity, which no one can reasonably doubt, assume a rank of more than common consideration. The accuracy with which the author has drawn her different characters is such, that, in every single instance, they must have been recognised by their intimates, had no names been attached to them ; and herein, she has just right to rank with the very few impartial and fearless historians of their own times ; but she has also the higher claim of having conferred on the moral state of society in Europe, such a benefit as is I believe without parallel.

This publication cannot fail to produce the greatest moral effect on the present and future generations. If

Vice is a monster, of such hideous mien,
That, to be hated, needs but to be seen,

when has vice ever been so unsparingly exposed ? Who has hitherto ever had the courage to beard the lion in his den ; to drag forth the monster from his most secret recesses, from his most impregnable fastnesses, in the castles of earthly power, strip him of the armour with which he had been, as not he only, but almost every one, supposed, invincibly clad, by the very giants of rank and fortune, and exhibit him shorn, at once, of all those glorious beams, whose dazzling glare blinded even the strongest-sighted spectators, deprived of all his means to do mischief, and harmless and submissive as the veriest pet lamb.

On the subject of the line generally taken by the

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journalists of this country in reference to these *Memoirs*, it was my wish to have analysed their conduct with the same freedom they themselves have assumed. The publisher however prefers to choose his own time and place and mode of treating them. They may, notwithstanding, solace themselves with my assurance that a day of retribution will come, and may be nearer than many of them anticipate. He has, in the meantime, subjoined an extract of a letter from Colonel Rochfort, to Mr. Stockdale, dated Paris 24th of March: it runs thus, smoothly and pithily enough:

“I shall not talk, or write about vulgar editors: but shall act, the first time I come to England, practically; and, if you like, you shall see me.”

This will do, for the present, from the husband and the publisher. Mrs. Rochfort speaks also for herself, of the learned doctor who edits the *New Times* and I shall venture to add, *ex uno, discit omnes.*

HER ANSWER, TO THE EDITOR OF THE “NEW TIMES,” IS AS FOLLOWS:

“While expressing my sincere gratitude to such friends as have held out a helping hand towards me, it would have been very ungrateful on my part, to have omitted some brief acknowledgment to my most cordial supporter the brilliant editor of the *New Times* newspaper. He, in a paragraph of at least a foot long, with true, genuine, manly dignity loads me, a female, who never injured him nor meant him harm, with the coarsest abuse, bestowing on me the most ungentlemanlike epithets!

“My book was going on well, it is true: still, there were, no doubt, thousands of young ladies who had neither read it, nor dreamt of reading it, when this paragraph of the kind and judicious editor, like the apple upon Eve, so worked upon their imagination and excited their curiosity:

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“ Most earnestly do we call on our fair country-women not to suffer such pollution to approach them, &c. &c. &c.”

“ He then goes on to prose something about pickling or preserving the chastity of virgins and matrons.

“ Now, if such a notice as the above was not actually meant to excite curiosity, and, by making the book circulate, effect the very horrors which he deprecates, I appeal to the candour of readers in general, whether this editor’s total ignorance of human nature as well as of the nature and properties of young ladies, does not entirely disqualify him for the profession of an editorial partisan. He must indeed be a weak and silly and spiteful sort of a reptile not worth my notice, were it not for my naturally grateful disposition, the man’s long-winded oration having put money into my pocket ; yet he is said to be a doctor, learned in the law, ycleped LL.D. and very probably A.S.S.

“ Great ends are often effected by little means. I am sorry he has worked himself up into such a desperately vengeful fit against me; because, really, when I, in the first Volume, mentioned Sophy’s porkman having wrapped her black pudding up with a dirty piece of *Times* newspaper, I never thought of calling its editor a dirty fellow, as that most worthy gentleman has taken it : but, could I help a cap fitting now and then, though it was never made to order ? I declare, I merely conceived the porkman’s greasy hands had made a dirty *Times* newspaper of it ; for, whether it be good or bad composition, I know not, as it is a paper which neither I nor any other well-bred person of my acquaintance ever looks into.

“ I would appeal, even to Fred. Lamb himself, on whom I perhaps have been a little too severe, whether the editor’s anonymous, personal, and low abuse of me, who affix my name to my *Memoirs*, is not disgraceful to any man ?

“ And then the worthy editor winds up his oration with an argument, which, to all noble fathers and parents of high taste and renown, must be found

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irresistible. He declares that his mighty immaculate pygmies, Gogs or Magogs, the Miss New Times's, or the Misses New Times, shall not read one line of my book!

“Quel malheur ! tant pour les Misses New Times, que pour moi !”

“But who on earth are the Miss New Times's ? We declare, plurally speaking, in humble imitation of the worthy editor, that we never once knew, saw, nor heard of such people, or if we did, like our Latin, we have forgotten them.

“Editors, I humbly suppose, ought to be something like gentlemen, and if, though they may be old ladies, they are really moral characters too, I conceive they would be justified in expressing with manly firmness, their disapproval of any publication which they believed to be dangerous or improper ; but the low meanness of loading with abuse a female like me, whose only protector resides on the continent, is the more cowardly, inasmuch as the said editors never applied those epithets to Lady Caroline Lamb, nor, in short, to any lady whose husband happened to be at hand, with that hand ready to pull their noses, if they have courage enough to let them appear.

“Now I beg to ask the editor of the *New Times*, what can be more immoral than Lady Caroline Lamb, a wife and mother, publishing her own desperate love-letters to Lord Byron, written under her husband's own roof ? Yet what editor ever took to task a lady whose friends were on the spot ? While this bold champion of the public morals spits his toad-like venom on me, who never yet deceived, nor acted a dishonourable part towards anybody, except myself, and who was at first forced into that unfortunate situation, which the heartless conduct of my former acquaintances obliged me to continue in. Yet, whatever may have been their sins against me, I am confident, as of my existence, that they will all express their unequalled disgust at the editor's unmanly abuse of me.”

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Thus far the fair auto-biographer. The whole and sole conduct of the editors may be defined in one word, selfishness. Their private pecuniary interest, and that alone, influenced their proceedings. They one and all expected to derive pecuniary advantage from the conduct they adopted in regard to these *Memoirs*, and, while many of them were abusing her, for having endeavoured to get money by her work, their single object was the very same, whether they affected to be loud in their complaints, whether they assumed a tone of moderation, or whether they were wholly silent—a very rare occurrence !

Scarcely inferior to the abuse of the press has been the abuse of power in the same case. Happy indeed is it for all concerned, and most happy for the general interests of society, that we live in a country where those who wield the sharpest swords with the most skilful hands, have even their power to oppress limited, and, from the throne itself, have bounds set to their wishes, by a constitution, which emphatically and almost with more than mortal voice exclaims, “Thus far shalt thou go and no farther.”

It will be observed that this work has proved no less obnoxious to those out of power, than to those in power, and to some, we might almost say, of every rank and class, from the highest to the lowest. Here then was an embodied phalanx to be encountered, which the invincible, giant-arm of truth could alone dare, could alone meet, could alone discomfit. The great mass of the people, who did not know how soon their turn might come, exulted indeed in their present security, but dared not venture to do more than remain neutral : while the very, very few, who, when they knocked at the door of their own consciences, were sure of a comfortable answer, gave their unostentatious, almost silent, and not very effective encouragement to the publisher, not to be borne down by the torrent of abuse, which glanced harmless from that head which it was intended to crush and overwhelm, and bury in a heap of disgusting ruins.

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A common interest, it was anticipated, would produce a more than common union of all the powers ; yet great is truth, and it will prevail !

Amicus Plato, amitus Socrates ; sed magis amica veritas.

The age of all the talents was revived on this occasion. Ministers and Opposition joined. White's, Brooke's, the United Service, and indeed all the principal clubs held meetings to extinguish this burning shame, which threatened an extent of desolation which, it was said, would make England not worth living in, and some actually quitted, while others prepared to quit it in consequence.

One sapient resolution was that they should not buy these *Memoirs* ; but the private curiosity of each, to see what figure his companions cut, rendered that resolve nugatory in a moment. Another resolution was to withdraw all custom from the publisher, and discountenance and annoy him in every possible way, especially by actions at law against him. This has been carried into effect, in a manner perhaps without precedent, and under the harass and expense of which, most physical and pecuniary resources would have given way ; but here again we have reason to be thankful, and with the motto, “Be firm and you triumph, fear and you fall !” we have pretty well weathered the imminent storm.

Then, probably, as a last resource, but we must not halloo before we are out of the wood, the strong hand of power put itself forth, in the person of the representative of our most gracious sovereign at the court of France. Lord Granville, whose personal beauty when Lord Granville Leveson Gower was inadequate to obtain him favour in the eyes of our fair Memoirist, replaced Sir Charles Stuart as ambassador at Paris. His noble magnanimity instantly rushed forward to seize an opening, however slight, to revenge the insult on his vanity, which, if it had ever slept, revived with more than pristine ardour, from the publicity given to it in this work. As has been already seen, he deprived

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our heroine of the right of transmitting her letters direct by the ambassador's bag. This, however, was an obstacle easy to surmount. Her letters still passed by the same conveyance; but through an intermediate friend. It was now evident that her letters were opened, delayed, and sometimes withheld, and, at last, any letter from her was interdicted a reception in this select baggage, owing, as was stated, to orders from the Foreign Office, in consequence of personal dislike of Stockdale, whose letters were constantly delayed and perused, and not unfrequently suppressed. Her publisher soon satisfied her that it could not be true that such conduct prevailed here; because his letters continued to be received at the Foreign Office, as they had ever been, and therefore that it must be a false and paltry subterfuge of her Parisian friends, who were endeavouring by such means to make a breach between author and publisher.

Convinced by this plain unvarnished tale Mrs. Rochfort made known her sentiments, and the ambassador's influence soon produced an inquiry in the Foreign Office, of course promoted by that brilliant and eloquent satirist, the Right Hon. Secretary, George Canning, to ascertain the individual who took charge of my letters, and give him a reprimand for the present and caution for the future.

The sentiments of the head of the office being now so effectively made known, Mr. Stockdale soon learnt it by the return of two packets. He instantly transmitted them to the Earl of Mount Charles, who, he was confident, from attachment to the lady, had no less the means than the will to oblige her in so very trifling a matter. What then was the publisher's surprise, to receive back his letters from Lord Mount Charles, notwithstanding his lordship had in the customary official manner put his own initials at the corner of their envelopes, with a message that Lord Mount Charles had not the means of forwarding them.

In a trivial case, it would be difficult to instance a

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more complete, a more servile, a more degrading submission to the fiat of political influence than this, by a scion of the most prominent and influential, if not the most opulent noble, in the peerage of the United Kingdom. Alas! we cannot parody the line and say of the independence of the young and high-born heir of the Marquisate of Conyngham.

And, fled from monarchs, Mount Charles, dwells with thee!

But we will pursue this disgusting un-Englishlike, and mean abuse of power no further, except to say that there is some reason to believe that the correspondence with this lady, which goes even by the General Post, at least from her publisher, is not kept inviolate; but whether at the English or at the French side of the Channel, this deponent saith not.

Before I wholly drop this subject, I am requested by Mrs. Rochfort to say that she has been like her publisher, so annoyed by anonymous and other impertinence, that, she will henceforth receive no letters whatever, unless they bear the superscription of the name and seal of their writers.

One or two trivial matters still remain to be noticed.

Charmouth, whither Harriette retired on the Marquis of Worcester's expatriation, is in Dorsetshire, not in Devonshire.

The publisher's courteous gallantry to the Countess of Clare induced him to make a communication to that lady and withhold the portion of the *Memoirs* which relates to her, until the printing had proceeded too far to admit its insertion in its assigned place, where Lord Ponsonby is spoken of, and this will therefore form part of the further *Memoirs*.

As the question of piracies, and Mr. Blore's proceedings against the publisher for libel, will find due publicity in the Court of King's Bench, I shall also, for the present, take my leave, after unsparing congratulations on the success of these *Memoirs*, and on their moral effects on society and manners throughout

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the civilised world, a consummation which will be assisted in no small degree by the series of prints, of which the publication has already commenced, and which, I cannot hesitate to affirm, are actually unrivalled in this or in any other country.

THOMAS LITTLE.

1st June, 1825.

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